

# THE UNFOLDMENT OF WORLD CIVILIZATION



by

Shoghi Effendi

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## Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánúm's Comments

on

### “The Unfoldment of World Civilization”

In 1936 he [Shoghi Effendi] wrote *The Unfoldment of World Civilization*; once again, as he so often did, Shoghi Effendi links this to the passing of ‘Abdu'l-Bahá. It was a further exposition of the state of the world, the rapid political, moral and spiritual decline evident in it, the weakening of both Christianity and Islam, the dangers humanity in its heedlessness was running, and the strong, divine, hopeful remedy the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh had to offer. Important and educative as these wonderful letters of the *Guardian* were they provided, in their wealth of apposite quotations from Bahá'u'lláh's own words which the *Guardian* had translated and lavishly cited, spiritual sustenance for the believers, for we know that the World of the Manifestation of God is the food of the soul. They also contained innumerable beautifully translated passages from the beloved Master's Tablets. All this bounty the *Guardian* spread for the believers in feast after feast, nourished them and raised up a new strong generation of servants in the Faith. His words fired their imagination, challenged them to rise to new heights, drove their roots deeper in the fertile soil of the Cause.

It is really during the 1930's that one sees a change manifest in Shoghi Effendi's writings. With the rapier of his pen in hand he now stands forth revealed as a giant. Where before one could trace a certain diffidence, an echo of the affliction of soul he had passed through after the ascension of the Master and his assumption of his high office, the crying out of his heart in its longing for the departed beloved of his life, now the tone changes and a man speaks forth his assurance with great confidence and strength. The warrior now knows what war is. He has been surprised, beset, wounded by vicious and spiritually perverse enemies. Something of the tender and trusting youth has gone forever. This change is manifest not only in the nature and power of his directives to the Bahá'í world, the fashion in which he is shaping the administration East and West and welding into a whole the disparate and diversified communities of which it is composed, but in a beauty and assurance in his style that steadily gathers glory as the years go by.

Concurrent with the period when these first illuminating letters on such major subjects were streaming from the pen of Shoghi Effendi, he undertook the translation of two books. In a letter written on 4 July 1930 Shoghi Effendi says “I feel exceedingly tired after a strenuous year of work, particularly as I have managed to add to my labours the translation of the *Íqán*, which I have already sent to America.” This was the first of his major translations, Baha'u'llah's great exposition on the station and role of the Manifestations of God, more particularly in the light of Islamic teachings and prophecies, known as the *Kitáb-i-Íqán* or Book of Certitude. It was an invaluable adjunct to the western Bahá'ís in their study of the Faith they had embraced and infinitely enriched their understanding of Divine Revelation.

—Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánúm, *The Priceless Pearl*, 213-214.

**DISCUSSION AND APPLICATION QUESTIONS**

1. How can the political evolution of the United States be used to explain the evolution of mankind toward world unity?
2. What are evidences in the world today of the two process of integration and disintegration?
3. Is God's visitation on the followers of Islam continuing today?
4. Paragraph 57 of this letter ("That the solidarity ...") refers to evidences of the decline of Christian institutions. Which of these evidences can be witnessed today?
5. What are the signs of moral downfall around us, and how could these challenges be exploited to share Bahá'u'lláh's healing Teachings?
6. How does Bahá'u'lláh's principle of collective security differ from current efforts to resolve global conflicts? In what ways does the United Nations fall short of Bahá'u'lláh's principle of collective security?

**IF TIME IS SHORT...**

Some communities will be able to conduct multiple sessions to thoroughly review these letters of the Guardian. As for those communities that may be able to have one or a few sessions, facilitators may want to consider focusing on the most significant portions of these letters in the limited time available (as opposed to starting out at the beginning of each letter and possibly never reaching the most important sections). It is suggested that the following sections may contain the most salient points of *The Unfoldment of World Civilization*:

- Two processes in world, paragraphs 23-25
- Collapse and fate of Islam, paragraphs 30-32, 45
- Deterioration of Christian institutions, paragraphs 52-58
- Signs of moral downfall, paragraphs 64-65, 67-69
- Bahá'u'lláh's principle of collective security, paragraphs 79-80
- Divine retribution, paragraphs 103-106
- Unification of mankind, paragraphs 107-111

## CHRONOLOGY OF BAHÁ'Í & WORLD EVENTS: 1933-1936

“The Unfoldment of World Civilization” was written in 1936. This chronology lists events from 1933—when Shoghi Effendi wrote “America and the Most Great Peace”—to 1936.

- 1933: Adolf Hitler proclaimed Chancellor of Germany is granted dictatorial powers later this year.
- 1933: Boycott of the Jews begins in Germany.
- 1933: Japan withdraws from the League of Nations.
- 1933: 23 October - Keith Ransom-Kehler dies of smallpox in Isfahán while on a mission for Shoghi Effendi. He proclaims her America's first martyr and a Hand of the Cause of God.
- 1933: The case of the House of Bahá'u'lláh in Baghdad is raised at the 24th session of the Permanent Mandates Commission of the League of Nations in Geneva.
- 1934: The first NSAs of Sudan, Iran, Australia and New Zealand are elected.
- 1934: U.S.S.R. admitted to the League of Nations.
- 1934: Winston Churchill warns British Parliament of German air menace.
- 1934: The government of Iran closes Bahá'í schools throughout the country.
- 1934: 10 May - Bahá'í properties on Mt. Carmel are granted tax exempt status.
- 1934: Ghandi suspends civil disobedience campaign in India.
- 1934: Dr. Susan Moody dies in Iran.
- 1935 Persia changes its name to Iran.
- 1935: Persecution of the Bahá'ís of Iran continues.
- 1935: Chiang Kai-shek named president of China.
- 1935: *Star of the West* is discontinued. *World Order Magazine* begins.
- October 2, 1935 Mussolini of Fascist Italy declared war on Ethiopia (Abyssinnia).
- October 3, 1935 Italy crossed Mereb river and attacked Ethiopia.
- 1935: League of Nations Assembly met and voted 50 to 4 to condemn Italy's invasion of Ethiopia. (Austria, Hungary, Italy and Albania were the 4 opposing.)
- 1935: July - Shoghi Effendi asks all Bahá'ís to withdraw from church membership.
- 1935: Oct. - Shoghi Effendi writes to the NSA of the USA & Canada stating that the laws of fasting, obligatory prayers, marriage consent, avoidance of alcoholic drinks and monogamy should be regarded as universally applicable and binding.
- 1936: Persecution of the Bahá'ís of Iran continues.
- 1936: Spanish Civil War begins in July.
- 1936: German troops occupy the Rhineland. Elections in Germany give Hitler 99% of the vote.
- 1936: War ends in Ethiopia. Italy annexes Ethiopia (Abyssinnia).
- 1936: Mussolini and Hitler proclaim Rome-Berlin Axis.
- 1936: FDR reelected by landslide.

## 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:

1 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 wellnigh fifteen years after His passing unfolds before us.

2 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 fairminded 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

**delineated**

Define; outline; describe; explain..

**travail**

Pain of childbirth; suffering; labor.

**herald**

Messenger; bearer of news.

**signalize**

To point particularly; to make conspicuous.

**misled** Deceive; delude; take in; misinform.

**deluded**

Taken in; misled; fooled; tricked; duped.

**ephemeral**

Brief; fleeting; temporary; momentary; short-lived.

**disruptive**

Upsetting; unruly; troublesome.

**chronic**

Constant; unending; continual; persistent.

**compelling**

Force to come or go (in some direction); drive or force together.

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.

3 “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 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**.”

4 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**,

**irresistible**

Tempting; appealing; enticing; alluring.

**principality**

Territory held or governed by a prince.

**solemnly**

Gravely; soberly.

**equilibrium**

Balance; stability.

**revolutionized**

Change (a thing) significantly or completely; reorganize or reconstruct (a thing) on new or radical lines

**agency**

Organization; bureau; group.

**unique**

Sole; single; exclusive; distinctive.

**convulse**

Shake violently.

**chaos**

Disorder; confusion; bedlam; turmoil; madness.

**discern**

Mark as separate or distinct; distinguish. Recognize the difference or distinction between.

**lamentably**

Unfortunately; sadly; undesirably; deplorably.

**prevailing**

Current; existing; widespread; popular.

**defective**

Faulty; imperfect; flawed; not working.

**enshrined**

Preserved; protected.

**enunciated**

Express; spell out; detail; voice.

**covenant**

Contract; promise; pledge; agreement.

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.

**5** 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.”

**6** 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

**harmonize**

Match; complement; go with.

**animate**

Stir; stimulate; liven up; rouse; bring to life.

**inculcated**

Instill an idea or habit into a person or a person's mind by forceful admonition or persistent repetition.

**variance**

Discrepancy; dissent; conflict; difference.

**sublime**

Inspiring; moving; uplifting; inspirational.

**ordained**

Intended; meant; fated; certain.

**expatiating**

Lengthy treatment of a topic.

**armaments**

Military weapons and equipment.

**discord**

Disagreement; conflict; dispute; friction.

**inculcated**

Instill an idea or habit into a person or a person's mind by forceful admonition or persistent repetition.

**ordained**

Intended; meant; fated; certain.

**naught**

Zero; nil; zilch; not anything.

**manifest**

Obvious; patent; evident; clear.

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 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.” [GL 203]

### Humanity’s Coming of Age.

7 The Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, whose supreme mission is none other but the achievement of this **organic** and spiritual unity of the whole body of nations, should, if we be faithful to its implications, be regarded

**fusion**

Union; mixture; blend; synthesis.

**ordinances**

Decree; order; rule; law; edict.

**sovereign**

Ruler; monarch; supreme ruler.

**remedy**

Solution; cure; answer; treatment.

**regenerate**

Renew; restore; revive; restart.

**lo**

Originally oh! Later, used to direct attention to a surprising fact or sight; see! look!

**mischief**

Harm; damage; trouble; hurt.

**beseemeth**

Befitting; becoming; is required of.

**organic**

Natural; whole; unrefined; crude.



as signaling through its **advent** the coming of age of the entire human race. It should be viewed not merely as yet another spiritual **revival** in the ever-changing fortunes of mankind, not only as a further stage in a chain of **progressive Revelations**, nor even as the culmination of one of a series of **recurrent** prophetic cycles, but rather as marking the last and highest stage in the **stupendous** evolution of man's collective life on this planet. The emergence of a world community, the consciousness of world citizenship, the founding of a world civilization and culture—all of which must **synchronize** with the initial stages in the unfoldment of the **Golden Age** of the Bahá'í Era—should, by their very nature, be regarded, as far as this planetary life is concerned, as the **furthermost limits** in the organization of human society, though man, as an individual, will, nay must indeed as a result of such a **consummation**, continue indefinitely to progress and develop.

8 That **mystic**, all-pervasive, yet indefinable change, which we associate with the stage of maturity **inevitable** in the life of the individual and the development of the fruit must, if we would correctly apprehend the utterances of Bahá'u'lláh, have its **counterpart** in the evolution of the organization of human society. A similar stage must sooner or later be attained in the collective life of mankind, producing an even more striking **phenomenon** in world relations, and endowing the whole human race with such potentialities of well-being as shall provide, throughout the succeeding ages, the chief **incentive** required for the eventual fulfillment of its high destiny. Such a stage of maturity in the process of human

**advent**

Start; beginning; dawn; initiation.

**revival**

Renewal; restoration; stimulation; recovery.

**recurrent**

Recurring; repeated; persistent; continuing.

**stupendous**

Astonishing; astounding; amazing; stunning.

**synchronize**

Harmonize; coordinate; match; orchestrate.

**consummation**

Completed; perfected; lacking nothing.

**mystic**

Spiritual; magic; supernatural; numinous.

**inevitable**

expected; foreseeable; predictable.

**counterpart**

Corresponding; equal; equivalent; opposite number.

**phenomenon**

Very notable or remarkable; extraordinary, exceptional.

**incentive**

Reason; spur; enticement; encouragement.

government must, for all time, if we would faithfully recognize the tremendous claim advanced by Bahá'u'lláh, remain identified with the Revelation of which He was the Bearer

**9** In one of the most characteristic passages He Himself has revealed, He testifies in a language that none can mistake to the truth of this distinguishing principle of Bahá'í belief: *“It hath been decreed by Us that the Word of God and all the potentialities thereof shall be manifested unto men in strict conformity with such conditions as have been foreordained by Him Who is the All-Knowing, the All-Wise... Should the Word be allowed to release suddenly all the energies latent within it, no man could sustain the weight of so mighty a revelation... Consider that which hath been sent down unto Muhammad, the Apostle of God. The measure of the Revelation of which He was the Bearer had been clearly foreordained by Him Who is the Almighty, the All-Powerful. They that heard Him, however, could apprehend His purpose only to the extent of their station and spiritual capacity. He, in like manner, uncovered the Face of Wisdom in **proportion** to their ability to sustain the burden of His Message. No sooner had mankind attained the stage of maturity, than the Word revealed to men’s eyes the latent energies with which it had been endowed—energies which manifested themselves in the **plenitude** of their glory when the Ancient Beauty appeared, in the **year sixty**, in the person of ‘Ali-Muhammad, the Báb.”*

**10** ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, **elucidating** this fundamental **verity**, has written: *“All created*

**proportion**

Amount; quantity; part; share.

**sustain**

Maintain; continue; carry on; uphold.

**plenitude**

The condition of being absolutely full in quantity, measure, or degree; completeness, perfection.

*things have their degree or stage of maturity. The period of maturity in the life of a tree is the time of its fruit-bearing... The animal attains a stage of full growth and completeness, and in the human kingdom man reaches his maturity when the light of his intelligence attains its greatest power and development... Similarly there are periods and stages in the collective life of humanity. At one time it was passing through its stage of childhood, at another its period of youth, but now it has entered its long-predicted phase of maturity, the evidences of which are everywhere apparent... That which was applicable to human needs during the early history of the race can neither meet nor satisfy the demands of this day, this period of newness and consummation. Humanity has emerged from its former state of limitation and preliminary training. Man must now become imbued with new virtues and powers, new moral standards, new capacities. New bounties, perfect bestowals, are awaiting and already descending upon him. The gifts and blessings of the period of youth, although timely and sufficient during the **adolescence** of mankind, are now incapable of meeting the requirements of its maturity.” [PUP 438-439]*

### **The Process of Integration**

**11** Such a unique and momentous crisis in the life of organized mankind may, moreover, be likened to the culminating stage in the political evolution of the great **American Republic**—the stage which marked the emergence of a unified community of **federated states**. The stirring of a new national consciousness, and the birth of a new type of

#### **elucidating**

Make clear; clarify; explain; reveal; illuminate.

#### **verity**

Truth; reality; actuality.

#### **adolescence**

Teenage years; teens; youth; puberty.

#### **integration**

Addition; mixing; combination.

civilization, infinitely richer and nobler than any which its component parts could have **severally** hoped to achieve, may be said to have proclaimed the coming of age of the American people. Within the territorial limits of this nation, this consummation may be viewed as the culmination of the process of human government. The **diversified** and loosely related elements of a divided community were brought together, unified and incorporated into one coherent system. Though this entity may continue gaining in cohesive power, though the unity already achieved may be further consolidated, though the civilization to which that unity could alone have given birth may expand and **flourish**, yet the machinery essential to such an unfoldment may be said to have been, in its essential structure, erected, and the **impulse** required to guide and sustain it may be regarded as having been fundamentally imparted. No stage above and beyond this consummation of national unity can, within the geographical limits of that nation, be imagined, though the highest destiny of its people, as a **constituent** element in a still larger entity that will embrace the whole of mankind, may still remain unfulfilled. Considered as an **isolated** unit, however, this process of integration may be said to have reached its highest and final consummation.

**12** Such is the stage to which an evolving humanity is collectively approaching. The Revelation entrusted by the Almighty **Ordainer** to Bahá'u'lláh, His followers firmly believe, has been endowed with such potentialities as are **commensurate** with the maturity of the human race—the crowning and most momentous stage in its evolution from infancy to manhood.

**federated**

Join together; unite; merge; coalesce.

**severally**

Apart from others or from the rest; not together or in a company.

**diversified**

Expand; spread; vary; broaden your horizons.

**flourish**

Thrive; grow; increase; prosper.

**impulse**

Desire; urge; whim; yen.

**constituent**

Basic; essential; fundamental; principal.

**isolated**

Separate from; cut off; detached; secluded.

**ordainer**

A person who ordains something or someone; spec. an ordaining bishop, priest, or minister.

**commensurate**

Equal; adequate; matching; proportionate.

**13** The **successive** Founders of all past Religions Who, from time immemorial, have shed, with ever-increasing **intensity**, the splendor of **one common Revelation** at the various stages which have marked the advance of mankind towards maturity may thus, in a sense, be regarded as preliminary Manifestations, anticipating and paving the way for the advent of that Day of Days when the whole earth will have **fructified** and the tree of humanity will have yielded its destined fruit.

**14** **Incontrovertible** as is this truth, its challenging character should never be allowed to **obscure** the purpose, or **distort** the principle, underlying the **utterances** of Bahá'u'lláh—utterances that have established for all time the absolute oneness of all the Prophets, Himself included, whether belonging to the past or to the future. Though the mission of the Prophets preceding Bahá'u'lláh may be viewed in that light, though the measure of Divine Revelation with which each has been entrusted must, as a result of this process of evolution, necessarily differ, their common origin, their essential unity, their identity of purpose, should at no time and under no circumstances be **misapprehended** or denied. That all the Messengers of God should be regarded as *“abiding in the same Tabernacle, soaring in the same Heaven, seated upon the same Throne, uttering the same Speech, and proclaiming the same Faith”* [KI/153-154] must, however much we may **extol** the measure of Divine Revelation vouchsafed to mankind at this crowning stage of its evolution, remain the unalterable foundation and central tenet

**successive**

Consecutive; succeeding; following.

**intense**

Strong; forceful; extreme; severe.

**fructified**

The process of bearing fruit.

**incontrovertible**

Unarguable; undeniable; unquestionable.

**obscure**

Indistinct; faint; murky; dim.

**distort**

Deform; disfigure; twist; bend; alter.

**uttering**

Speaking; voicing; expressing.

**misapprehended**

Fail to understand rightly, misunderstand.

of Bahá'í belief. Any variations in the splendor which each of these Manifestations of the Light of God has shed upon the world should be **ascribed** not to any inherent superiority involved in the essential character of any one of them, but rather to the progressive capacity, the ever-increasing **spiritual receptiveness**, which mankind, in its progress towards maturity, has invariably manifested.

### The Final Consummation

**15** Only those who are willing to associate the Revelation proclaimed by Bahá'u'lláh with the consummation of so stupendous an evolution in the collective life of the whole human race can grasp the significance of the words which He, while alluding to the glories of this promised Day and to the duration of the Bahá'í Era, has deemed fit to utter. *“This is the King of Days,”* [P&M LXXI, 117] He exclaims, *“the Day that hath seen the coming of the Best-Beloved, Him Who, through all eternity, hath been acclaimed the Desire of the World.”* *“The Scriptures of past Dispensations,”* He further asserts, *“celebrate the great jubilee that must needs greet this most great Day of God. Well is it with him that hath lived to see this Day and hath recognized its station.”* *“It is evident,”* He, in another passage explains, *“that every age in which a **Manifestation** of God hath lived is divinely-ordained, and may, in a sense, be characterized as God’s appointed Day. This Day, however, is unique, and is to be distinguished from those that have preceded it. The designation ‘**Seal of the Prophets**’ fully revealeth its high station. The **Prophetic Cycle** hath verily ended. The*

**extol**

Praise; exalt; commend; admire; worship.

**ascribed**

Credited; attributed; endorsed; approved.

**receptiveness**

Openness; interest; approachability.

**jubilee**

Celebration; anniversary; festival.

**evident**

Obvious; plain; apparent; clear; manifest.

**Manifestation**

A Divine Being Who perfectly manifests the qualities and attributes of God.

*Eternal Truth is now come. He hath lifted up the ensign of power, and is now shedding upon the world the unclouded splendor of His Revelation.*” [GL XXV, 60] “*In this most mighty Revelation,*” He, in **categorical** language, declares, “*all the Dispensations of the past have attained their highest, their final consummation.*” [GL CLXI, 340] *That which hath been made manifest in this preëminent, this most exalted Revelation, standeth unparalleled in the annals of the past, nor will future ages witness its like.*”

**16** ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s authentic pronouncements should, likewise, be recalled as confirming, in no less emphatic manner, the unexampled vastness of the Bahá’í Dispensation. “*Centuries,*” He affirms in one of His Tablets, “*nay, countless ages, must pass away ere the mere contemplation of the Dispensation inaugurated by the Blessed Beauty would have sufficed to overwhelm the saints of Day-Star of Truth shineth again in its mid-summer splendor, or appeareth once more in the radiance of its vernal glory... The mere contemplation of the Dispensation inaugurated by the Blessed Beauty would have sufficed to overwhelm the saints of bygone ages—saints who longed to partake, for one moment, of its great glory.*” “*Concerning the Manifestations that will come down in the future ‘in the shadows of the clouds,’*” [GL XLVII, 101] He, in a still more definite language, affirms, “*know, verily, that in so far as their relation to the Source of their inspiration is concerned, they are under the shadow of the Ancient Beauty. In their relation, however, to the age in which they*

**categorical**

Definite; clear-cut; unqualified; resounding.

**preeminent**

Top; finest; greatest; paramount.

**annals**

Records; chronicles; history; archives.

**ere**

Before in time.

**dispensation**

The sacred Word given by God’s chosen Messenger in every cycle of progressive revelation.

**overwhelm**

Overpower; overcome; engulf; beat.

**vernal**

Coming, appearing, or occurring in spring.

**bygone**

Past; former; previous; departed; olden.

*appear, each and every one of them 'doeth whatsoever He willeth.'*” “*This holy Dispensation,*” He, alluding to the Revelation of Bahá’u’lláh, explains, “*is illumined with the light of the Sun of Truth shining from its most exalted station, and in the plenitude of its resplendency, its heat and glory.*”

### **Pangs of Death and Birth**

**17** Dearly-beloved friends: Though the Revelation of Bahá’u’lláh has been delivered, the World Order which such a Revelation must needs beget is as yet unborn. Though the **Heroic Age** of His Faith is passed, the creative energies which that Age has released have not as yet **crystallized** into that world society which, in the fullness of time, is to mirror forth the brightness of His glory. Though the framework of His Administrative Order has been erected, and the **Formative Period** of the **Bahá’í Era** has begun, yet the promised Kingdom into which the seed of His institutions must ripen remains as yet uninaugurated. Though His Voice has been raised, and the ensigns of His Faith have been lifted up in no less than forty countries of both the East and the West, yet the wholeness of the human race is as yet unrecognized, its unity unproclaimed, and the standard of its **Most Great Peace** unhoisted.

**18** “*The heights,*” Bahá’u’lláh Himself testifies, “*which, through the most gracious favor of God, mortal man can attain in this Day are as yet unrevealed to his sight. The world of being hath never had, nor doth it yet possess, the capacity for such a revelation. The day, however, is approaching when the*

**pangs**

Twinge; spasm; paroxysm; cramp.

**crystallized**

Assume permanent form or shape.

**formative**

Determining; influential; decisive; shaping.



*potentialities of so great a favor will, by virtue of His behest, be manifested unto men.”*

[GL, CIX, 214]

**19** For the revelation of so great a favor a period of **intense** turmoil and wide-spread suffering would seem to be **indispensable**. **Resplendent** as has been the Age that has witnessed the **inception** of the Mission with which Bahá'u'lláh has been entrusted, the interval which must elapse ere that Age yields its choicest fruit must, it is becoming increasingly apparent, be overshadowed by such moral and social gloom as can alone prepare an **unrepentant** humanity for the prize she is destined to inherit.

**20** Into such a period we are now steadily and irresistibly moving. Amidst the shadows which are increasingly gathering about us we can faintly discern the glimmerings of Bahá'u'lláh's unearthly sovereignty appearing fitfully on the horizon of history. To us, the "generation of the half-light," living at a time which may be designated as the period of the **incubation** of the World **Commonwealth envisaged** by Bahá'u'lláh, has been assigned a task whose high privilege we can never sufficiently appreciate, and the arduousness of which we can as yet but dimly recognize. We may well believe, we who are called upon to experience the operation of the dark forces destined to unloose a flood of agonizing afflictions, that the darkest hour that must **precede** the dawn of the **Golden Age** of our Faith has not yet struck. Deep as is the gloom that already encircles the world, the afflictive ordeals which that world is to suffer are still in preparation, nor can their blackness be as yet imagined. We stand on the threshold

**behest**

Request; command; order; will.

**Intense**

Strong; forceful; extreme; severe.

**indispensable**

Crucial; vital; essential; key.

**resplendent**

Splendid; glorious; brilliant; stunning.

**Inception**

Beginning; start; origin; launch.

**unrepentant**

Not sorry; unashamed; shameless.

**incubation**

The action of incubating eggs; the embryonic development of an animal within an egg.

**Commonwealth**

The body politic; a nation, viewed as a Community in which everyone has an interest.

**envisaged**

Imagined; envisioned; predicted; visualized.

**precede**

Head; lead; come first; herald.

of an age whose convulsions proclaim alike the death-pangs of the old order and the birth-pangs of the new. Through the generating influence of the Faith announced by Bahá'u'lláh this New World Order may be said to have been conceived. We can, at the present moment, experience its stirrings in the womb of a **travailing** age—an age waiting for the appointed hour at which it can cast its burden and yield its fairest fruit.

**21** “*The whole earth,*” writes Bahá'u'lláh, “*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. Immeasurably exalted is the breeze that wafteth from the garment of thy Lord, the Glorified! For lo, it hath breathed its fragrance and made all things new! Well is it with them that comprehend.*” “*The onrushing winds of the grace of God,*” He, in the **Súratu'l-Haykal**, proclaims, “*have passed over all things. Every creature hath been endowed with all the potentialities it can carry. And yet the peoples of the world have denied this grace! Every tree hath been endowed with the choicest fruits, every ocean enriched with the most luminous gems. Man, himself, hath been invested with the gifts of understanding and knowledge. The whole creation hath been made the recipient of the revelation of the All-Merciful, and the earth the repository of things inscrutable to all except God, the Truth, the Knower of things unseen. The time is approaching when every created thing will have cast its burden. Glorified be God Who hath vouchsafed this grace that encompasseth all things, whether seen or unseen!*”

**pangs**

Twinges; spasms; paroxysms; cramps.

**travailing**

A painful or laborious task as in childbirth.

**sprung**

Leap; bound; jump.

**enchanting**

Charming; captivating; enthralling; delightful.

**luminous**

Glowing; shining; bright; gleaming.

**invested**

Endowed with; provided with; supplied.

**recipient**

Receiver; beneficiary; heir; addressee.

**inscrutable**

Hard to make out; unreadable.

22 *“The Call of God,”* ‘Abdu’l-Bahá has written, *“when raised, breathed a new life into the body of mankind, and infused a new spirit into the whole creation. It is for this reason that the world hath been moved to its depths, and the hearts and consciences of men been quickened. Erelong the evidences of this regeneration will be revealed, and the fast asleep will be awakened.”*

### Universal Fermentation

23 As we view the world around us, we are compelled to observe the manifold evidences of that universal fermentation which, in every continent of the globe and in every department of human life, be it religious, social, economic or political, is purging and reshaping humanity in anticipation of the Day when the wholeness of the human race will have been recognized and its unity established. A twofold process, however, can be distinguished, each tending, in its own way and with an accelerated momentum, to bring to a climax the forces that are transforming the face of our planet. The first is essentially an integrating process, while the second is fundamentally disruptive. The former, as it steadily evolves, unfolds a System which may well serve as a pattern for that world polity towards which a strangely-disordered world is continually advancing; while the latter, as its disintegrating influence deepens, tends to tear down, with increasing violence, the antiquated barriers that seek to block humanity’s progress towards its destined goal. The constructive process stands associated with the nascent Faith of Bahá’u’lláh, and is the harbinger of the New

infused

Poured; shed; instilled; introduced.

manifold

Various; diverse; many; multiple.

fermentation

A state of excitement or agitation.

climax

Peak; high point; pinnacle.

evolves

Develop; change; grow; progress; advance.

disordered

Chaotic; messy; muddled; lawless; anarchic

disintegrating

Decayed; putrid; bad; decomposed; moldy.

antiquated

Very old; outdated; old-fashioned.

nascent

Budding; emerging; growing; embryonic.

harbinger

Forerunner; herald; portent; omen.

World Order that Faith must ere long establish. The destructive forces that characterize the other should be identified with a civilization that has refused to answer to the expectation of a new age, and is consequently falling into chaos and **decline**.

**24** A titanic, a spiritual struggle, unparalleled in its magnitude yet unspeakably glorious in its ultimate consequences, is being waged as a result of these opposing tendencies, in this **age of transition** through which the organized community of the followers of Bahá'u'lláh and mankind as a whole are passing.

**25** The Spirit that has **incarnated itself** in the institutions of a rising Faith has, in the course of its onward march for the redemption of the world, encountered and is now battling with such forces as are, in most instances, the very **negation** of that Spirit, and whose continued existence must inevitably **hinder** it from achieving its purpose. The hollow and outworn institutions, the **obsolescent** doctrines and beliefs, the **effete** and discredited traditions which these forces represent, it should be observed, have, in certain instances, been undermined by virtue of their **senility**, the loss of their cohesive power, and their own inherent corruption. A few have been swept away by the onrushing forces which the Bahá'í Faith has, at the hour of its birth, so mysteriously released. Others, as a direct result of a **vain** and feeble resistance to its rise in the initial stages of its development, have died out and been utterly discredited. Still others, fearful of the **pervasive** influence of the institutions in

**decline**

Weakening; decay; waning; drop.

**negation**

Denial; repudiation; exclusion; refusal.

**hinder**

Hold back; delay; obstruct; thwart.

**obsolescent**

Out of date; dated; obsolete; outmoded.

**effete**

No longer vigorous or capable of effective action; decadent, degenerate.

**senility**

The condition of being senile; mental or physical infirmity due to old age.

**vain**

Hopeless; futile; useless; abortive.

**pervasive**

All-encompassing; enveloping; insidious.

which that same Spirit had, at a later stage, been embodied, had **mobilized** their forces and launched their attack, destined to sustain, in their turn, after a brief and **illusory** success, an **ignominious** defeat.

### **This Age of Transition**

**26** It is not my purpose to call to mind, much less to attempt a detailed **analysis** of, the spiritual struggles that have ensued, or to note the victories that have redounded to the glory of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh since the day of its foundation. My chief concern is not with the happenings that have distinguished the First, the **Apostolic Age** of the Bahá'í Dispensation, but rather with the outstanding events that are transpiring in, and the tendencies which characterize, the formative period of its development, this **Age of Transition**, whose tribulations are the precursors of that Era of blissful **felicity** which is to **incarnate** God's ultimate purpose for all mankind.

**27** To the **catastrophic** fall of mighty **kingdoms and empires**, on the eve of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's departure, Whose passing may be said to have ushered in the opening phase of the Age of Transition in which we now live, I have, in a previous communication, briefly alluded. The **dissolution** of the **German Empire**, the humiliating defeat inflicted upon its ruler, the **successor** and lineal descendant of the **Prussian** King and Emperor to whom Bahá'u'lláh had addressed His **solemn** and historic warning, together with the **extinction** of the **Austro-Hungarian Monarchy**, the

**mobilized**

Assemble; gather together; assemble.

**illusory**

Deceptive; false; illusive; not real.

**ignominious**

Humiliating; shameful; dishonorable.

**analysis**

Study; examination; scrutiny; breakdown.

**felicity**

The state or an instance of being happy; happiness, bliss.

**incarnate**

Embodied; made flesh; alive; in person.

**catastrophe**

Disaster; calamity; ruin; misfortune.

**dissolution**

Closure; disbanding; ending; termination.

**successor**

Heir; descendant.

**prussian**

Of or pertaining to Prussia, a former Polish and later German duchy and kingdom, orig. centred in NE Europe along the south coast of the Baltic and now divided among Germany, Poland, and Russia; originating in or associated with Prussia.

**solemn**

Somber; grave; sober; sad.

**extinction**

Loss; end; destruction; disappearance.

remnant of the once-great **Holy Roman Empire**, were both precipitated by a war whose outbreak signaled the opening of the Age of Frustration destined to precede the establishment of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh. Both of these momentous events may be viewed as the earliest occurrences of that **turbulent** Age, into the outer fringes of whose darkest phase we are now beginning to enter.

**28** To the **Conqueror of Napoleon III**, the Author of our Faith had, on the morrow of the King's victory, addressed, in His Most Holy Book, this clear and **ominous** warning: *“O King of Berlin! ...Take heed lest pride debar thee from recognizing the Day-Spring of Divine Revelation, lest earthly desires shut thee out, as by a veil, from the Lord of the Throne above and of the earth below. Thus counseleth thee the Pen of the Most High. He, verily, is the Most Gracious, the All-Bountiful. Do thou remember the one whose power transcended thy power (Napoleon III), and whose station excelled thy station. Where is he? Whither are gone the things he possessed? Take warning, and be not of them that are fast asleep. He it was who cast the Tablet of God behind him, when We made known unto him what the hosts of tyranny had caused Us to suffer. Wherefore, disgrace assailed him from all sides, and he went down to dust in great loss. Think deeply, O King, concerning him, and concerning them who, like unto thee, have conquered cities and ruled over men. The All-Merciful brought them down from their palaces to their graves. Be warned, be of them who reflect.”* [KA, para 86, 51]

**turbulent**

Confused; chaotic; unstable.

**ominous**

Threatening; warning; gloomy; worrying.

**lest**

In case; for fear that.

**debar**

Refuse entry to; exclude; bar; exclude.

**transcended**

Go beyond; exceed; excel; surpass.

**tyranny**

Oppression; autocracy; despotism.

29 “O banks of the Rhine!” Bahá’u’lláh, in another passage of that same Book, prophesies, “We have seen you covered with gore, inasmuch as the swords of *retribution* were drawn against you; and so you shall have another turn. And We hear the lamentations of Berlin, though she be today in *conspicuous* glory.” [KA, para 90, 51]

### Collapse of Islám

30 The collapse of the power of the *Shí’ih hierarchy*, in a land which had for centuries been one of the *impregnable* strongholds of Muslim *fanaticism*, was the inevitable consequence of that wave of secularization which, at a later time, was to invade some of the most powerful and conservative *ecclesiastical* institutions in both the European and American continents. Though not the direct outcome of the last war, this sudden trembling which had seized this *hitherto* immovable pillar of Islámic orthodoxy accentuated the problems and deepened the restlessness with which a war-weary world was being afflicted. *Shí’ih Islám* had lost once for all, in Bahá’u’lláh’s *native* land and as the direct consequence of its *implacable* hostility to His Faith, its *combative* power, had *forfeited* its rights and privileges, had been degraded and demoralized, and was being condemned to hopeless obscurity and ultimate extinction. No less than twenty thousand martyrs, however, had to sacrifice their lives ere the Cause for which they had stood and died could register this initial victory over those who were the first to *repudiate* its claims and mow down its *gallant* warriors. “Vileness and poverty were stamped upon them, and they

*retribution*

Payback; reprisal; vengeance; revenge.

*conspicuous*

Clear; noticeable; striking; evident; plain.

*hierarchy*

Pecking order; ladder; chain of command.

*impregnable*

Unable to be taken by force. A fortress proof against attack, unassailable.

*fanaticism*

Passion; zeal; keenness; devotion.

*ecclesiastical*

Church; clerical; religious; priestly.

*hitherto*

Up till now; thus far; so far.

*native* Indigeneous; local; resident.

*implacable*

Cruel; rigid; merciless; hardhearted.

*combative*

Argumentative; aggressive; confrontational.

*forfeited*

Lost; gave up; lose the right to.

*repudiate*

Reject; disclaim; deny; not accept.

*gallant*

Brave; heroic; valiant; fearless.

returned with **wrath** from God.”

**31** “Behold,” writes Bahá’u’lláh, commenting on the decline of a fallen people, “how the sayings and doings of Shí’ih Islám have dulled the joy and fervor of its early days, and tarnished the **pristine** brilliancy of its light. In its primitive days, whilst they still adhered to the precepts associated with the name of their Prophet, the Lord of mankind, their career was marked by an unbroken chain of victories and triumphs. As they gradually strayed from the path of their Ideal Leader and Master, as they turned away from the light of God and corrupted the principle of His Divine unity, and as they increasingly centered their attention upon them who were only the revealers of the **potency** of His Word, their power was turned into weakness, their glory into shame, their courage into fear. Thou dost witness to what a pass they have come.”

**32** The downfall of the **Qájár Dynasty**, the avowed defender and the willing instrument of a decaying clergy, almost synchronized with the **humiliation** which the Shí’ih ecclesiastical leaders had suffered. From Muhammad Sháh down to the last and feeble monarch of that dynasty, the Faith of Bahá’u’lláh was denied the **impartial** consideration, the **disinterested** and fair treatment which its cause had rightly demanded. It had, on the contrary, been atrociously harassed, **consistently** betrayed and prosecuted. The martyrdom of the Báb; the banishment of Bahá’u’lláh; the **confiscation** of His earthly possessions; His **incarceration** in **Mazindaran**; the reign of terror that confined Him in the most

**wrath**

Anger; rage; fury.

**pristine**

Perfect; unspoiled; pure; spotless.

**potency**

Great power, authority, or influence. Power to cause a physical effect; specially the power to intoxicate.

**humiliation**

Disgrace; shame; embarrassment.

**impartial**

Neutral; fair; independent; objective.

**disinterested**

Unbiased; objective; neutral; impartial.

**consistently**

Every time; constantly; without fail; always.

**confiscation**

Taking away; elimination; subtraction; deletion

**incarceration**

Imprisonment; captivity; confinement; internment.



pestilential of dungeons; the intrigues, the protests, and calumnies which thrice renewed His exile and led to His ultimate imprisonment in the most desolate of cities; the shameful sentences passed, with the connivance of the judicial and ecclesiastical authorities, against the person, the property, and the honor of His innocent followers—these stand out as among the blackest acts for which posterity will hold this blood-stained dynasty responsible. One more barrier that had sought to obstruct the forward march of the Faith was now removed.

**33** Though Bahá'u'lláh had been banished from His native land, the tide of calamity which had swept with such fury over Him and over the followers of the Báb, was by no means receding. Under the jurisdiction of the Sultán of Turkey, the arch-enemy of His Cause, a new chapter in the history of His ever-recurring trials had opened. The overthrow of the Sultánate and the Caliphate, the twin pillars of Sunní Islám, can be regarded in no other light except as the inevitable consequence of the fierce, the sustained and deliberate persecution which the monarchs of the tottering House of 'Uthmán, the recognized successors of the Prophet Muhammad, had launched against it. From the city of Constantinople, the traditional seat of both the Sultánate and the Caliphate, the rulers of Turkey had, for a period covering almost three quarters of a century, striven, with unabated zeal, to stem the tide of a Faith they feared and abhorred. From the time Bahá'u'lláh set foot on Turkish soil and was made a virtual prisoner of the most powerful potentate of Islám to the year of the Holy Land's liberation from Turkish

pestilential

Producing or tending to produce.

dungeons

Prisons; cells; jails.

intrigues

Plotting; scheming; maneuverings.

calumnies

Slander; libel; lies; slurs; smears.

connivance

Involvement; collusion; support; participation.

posterity

Future generations; future recognition.

dynasty

Family; house; line.

obstruct

Hinder; block; impede; frustrate.

calamity

Disaster; catastrophe; mishap; blow.

fury

Rage; ferocity; anger; wrath.

jurisdiction

Authority; control; influence; rule.

Sultán

The monarch or chief ruler of a Muslim country.

persecution

Maltreatment; bullying; singling out.

tottering

Faltering; stumbling; staggering; wobbling.

zeal Enthusiasm; passion; fervor; ardor.

abhorred

Detest; hate; loathe; dislike; despise.

virtual Near; effective; implicit; fundamental.

yoke, successive Caliphs, and in particular the Sultáns ‘Abdu’l-’Azíz and ‘Abdu’l-Hamíd, had, in the full exercise of the spiritual and temporal authority which their exalted office had conferred upon them, afflicted both the Founder of our Faith and the Center of His Covenant with such pain and tribulation as no mind can fathom nor pen or tongue describe. They alone could have measured or borne them.

**34** To these afflictive trials Bahá’u’lláh has repeatedly testified: “By the righteousness of the Almighty! Were I to recount to thee the tale of the things that have befallen Me, the souls and minds of men would be incapable of sustaining its weight. God Himself beareth Me witness.” “Twenty years have passed,” He, addressing the kings of Christendom, has written, “during which We have, each day, tasted the agony of a fresh tribulation. No one of them that were before Us hath endured the things We have endured. Would that ye could perceive it! They that rose up against us have put us to death, have shed our blood, have plundered our property, and violated our honor.” “Recall to mind My sorrows,” He, in another connection, has revealed, “My cares and anxieties, My woes and trials, the state of My captivity, the tears that I have shed, the bitterness of Mine anguish, and now Mine imprisonment in this far-off land... Couldst thou be told what hath befallen the Ancient Beauty, thou wouldst flee into the wilderness, and weep with a great weeping... Every morning I arose from my bed, I discovered the hosts of countless afflictions massed behind My door; and every night when I lay down, lo, My heart was torn with agony at what it had suffered from the fiendish cruelty of its foes.”

yoke

Repression; burden; bondage.

fathom

Understand; work; grasp; make out.

borne

Bear; carry; transmit; conduct.

plundered

Stole; looted; robbed; ransacked.

violated

Dishonored; desecrated; debased; sullied.

afflictions

Sufferings; difficulties; burdens; problems; miseries.

fiendish

Evil; brutal; monstrous; cruel.

**35** The orders which these foes **issued**, the banishments they decreed, the **indignities** they inflicted, the plans they devised, the investigations they conducted, the threats they pronounced, the **atrocities** they were prepared to commit, the **intrigues** and baseness to which they, their ministers, their governors, and military chieftains had stooped, constitute a record which can hardly find a parallel in the history of any revealed religion. The mere **recital** of the most salient features of that **sinister** theme would **suffice** to fill a volume. They knew full well that the spiritual and administrative Center of the Cause they had striven to **eradicate** had now shifted to their **dominion**, that its leaders were Turkish citizens, and that whatever resources these could command were at their mercy. That for a period of almost three score years and ten, while still in the **plenitude** of its unquestioned authority, while reinforced by the endless **machinations** of the civil and ecclesiastical authorities of a neighboring nation, and assured of the support of those of Bahá'u'lláh's **kindred** who had rebelled against, and **seceded** from, His Cause, this despotism should have failed in the end to **extirpate** a mere handful of its condemned subjects must, to every unbelieving observer, remain one of the most intriguing and mysterious **episodes** of contemporary history.

**36** The Cause of which Bahá'u'lláh was still the visible leader had, despite the calculations of a short-sighted enemy, undeniably triumphed. No **unbiased** mind, penetrating the surface of conditions surrounding the Prisoner of 'Akká, could any longer mistake or deny it. Though the tension

**issued**

Published; broadcast; released; announced.

**indignities**

Shame; disgrace; humiliation; dishonor.

**atrocities**

Carnage; slaughter; killing; violence; mayhem.

**intrigues**

Plottings; schemings; maneuverings.

**recital**

Reading; recitation; presentation; performance.

**sinister**

Make known or display in a striking manner.

**suffice**

Be enough; be sufficient; be adequate.

**eradicate**

Eliminate; wipe out; destroy; remove.

**dominion**

Authority; power; command; domination.

**plenitude**

The condition of being absolutely full in quantity, measure, or degree; completeness, perfection.

**kindred**

Family members. relatives

**seceded**

Separate; split; withdraw; pull out.

**extirpate**

Do away with as such; break up; expel.

**episodes**

Chapter; part; section; installment.

**unbiased**

Impartial; balanced; dispassionate; fair; equitable.

which had been relaxed was, for a time, heightened after Bahá'u'lláh's **ascension** and the perils of a still unsettled situation were revived, it was becoming increasingly evident that the **insidious** forces of decay, which for many a long year were eating into the **vitals** of a diseased nation, were now moving towards a climax. A series of internal convulsions, each more **devastating** than the previous one, had already been unchained, destined to bring in their wake one of the most catastrophic occurrences of modern times. The murder of that arrogant **despot** in the year 1876; the **Russo-Turkish** conflict that soon followed in its wake; the wars of liberation which succeeded it; the rise of the Young Turk movement; the **Turkish Revolution of 1909** that precipitated the downfall of 'Abdu'l-Hamíd; the Balkan wars with their calamitous consequences; the **liberation of Palestine** enshrining within its **bosom** the cities of 'Akká and Haifa, the world center of an **emancipated** Faith; the further **dismemberment** decreed by the Treaty of Versailles; the abolition of the Sultanate and the downfall of the **House of 'Uthmán**; the extinction of the Caliphate; the **disestablishment** of the State Religion; the annulment of the **Sharí'ah Law** and the **promulgation** of a universal Civil Code; the **suppression** of various orders, beliefs, traditions and ceremonials believed to be **inextricably interwoven** with the fabric of the Muslim Faith—these followed with an ease and swiftness that no man had dared **envisage**. In these devastating blows, administered by friend and foe alike, by Christian nations and professing Muslims, every follower of the persecuted Faith of Bahá'u'lláh recognized evidences of the directing Hand of the

**ascension**

Soul passing to next world; death; rising.

**Insidious**

Sinister; subtle; dangerous; menacing.

**vitals**

Organs of the body.

**devastating**

Overwhelming; shocking; upsetting; distressing.

**despot**

Dictator; tyrant; autocrat; oppressor.

**bosom**

The human chest or breast; the heart or center:

**emancipated**

Liberated; boundless; limitless; uncontrolled.

**dismemberment**

A detached part formed by separation from the main body.

**disestablishment**

Terminate the establishment of, depose from an official position; spec. deprive (a Church) of a special State connection and support, remove from a position as the national or State Church.

**promulgation**

Spread; broadcast; circulation; dissemination.

**suppression**

Repression; control; restraint; inhibition.

**inextricably**

Unable to be disentangled or untied; unable to be solved or resolved, intricately involved or confused.

**interwoven**

Blended together; mixed.

**envisage**

Imagine; envision; predict; visualize.

departed Founder of his religion, Who, from the invisible Realm, was unloosing a flood of well deserved calamities upon a rebellious religion and nation.

**37** Compare the evidences of Divine visitation which befell the persecutors of Jesus Christ with these historic retributions which, in the latter part of the first century of the Bahá'í Era, have hurled to dust the chief **adversary** of the religion of Bahá'u'lláh. Had not the **Roman Emperor**, in the second half of the first century of the Christian Era, after a distressful **siege** of Jerusalem, laid waste the Holy City, destroyed the Temple, desecrated and robbed the **Holy of Holies** of its treasures, and transported them to Rome, reared a **pagan colony** on the mount of **Zion**, **massacred the Jews**, and exiled and **dispersed** the survivors?

**38** Compare, moreover, these words which the persecuted Christ, as witnessed by the Gospel, addressed to Jerusalem, with Bahá'u'lláh's **apostrophe** to **Constantinople**, revealed while He lay in His far-off Prison, and recorded in His Most Holy Book: "*O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the Prophets and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings!*" [Matt. 23:37] And again, as He wept over the city: "*If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and*

**adversary**

Opponent; rival; enemy; foe; challenger.

**siege**

Blockade; cordon.

**pagan**

A person holding religious beliefs other than those of any of the main religions of the world, spec. a non-Christian; (derog.) a follower of a polytheistic or pantheistic religion. Also transf., a person holding views not consonant with a prevailing system of belief etc. (now rare); a person considered as being of irreligious or unrestrained character or behaviour.

**Zion** The house or household of the God of Israel; the Jewish people and religion. Also in Christian use, the Christian Church; the Kingdom of God; heaven; a place of worship.?

**dispersed**

Discrete; detached; isolated; single.

**apostrophe**

Sudden exclamatory address; an exclamatory passage.

*thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.”*

[Luke: 19:42-44]

**39** “O Spot that art *situate* on the shores of the two seas!” Bahá’u’lláh thus *apostrophizes* the City of Constantinople, “The throne of tyranny hath, verily, been established upon thee, and the flame of hatred hath been *kindled* within thy bosom, in such wise that the Concourse on high and they who circle around the Exalted Throne have wailed and lamented. We behold in thee the *foolish* ruling over the wise, and darkness vaunting itself against the light. Thou art indeed filled with manifest pride. Hath thine outward splendor made thee vainglorious? By Him Who is the Lord of mankind! It shall soon perish, and thy daughters and thy widows and all the kindreds that dwell within thee shall *lament*. Thus informeth thee the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.”

**40** To Sultán ‘Abdu’l-‘Azíz, the monarch who decreed each of Bahá’u’lláh’s three banishments, the Founder of our Faith, while a prisoner in the Sultán’s capital, addressed these words: “Hearken, O king, to the speech of Him that speaketh the truth, Him that doth not ask thee to recompense Him with the things God hath chosen to *bestow* upon thee, Him Who unerringly treadeth the Straight Path... Set before thine eyes God’s unerring Balance and, as one standing in His presence, weigh in that Balance thine actions every day, every moment of thy life. Bring thyself to account ere thou art summoned to a

*situate* Menacing; ominous; evil; disturbing.

*apostrophizes*

Address (someone or something) in a rhetorical apostrophe; use apostrophe.

*kindled*

Inflame, arouse, inspire, an emotion, feeling, etc.; give rise to (trouble etc.).

*foolish*

Unwise; thoughtless; silly; idiotic.

*lament*

Mourn; grieve; cry for; weep for.

*bestow*

Give; confer; donate; grant; present.

*reckoning*

Calculation; estimate; sums; weighing up.

*reckoning, on the day when no man shall have strength to stand for fear of God, the day when the hearts of the heedless ones shall be made to tremble.”*

**41** To the Ministers of the Turkish State, He, in that same Tablet, revealed: “*It behooveth you, O Ministers of State, to keep the precepts of God, and to forsake your own laws and regulations, and to be of them who are guided aright... Ye shall, ere long, discover the consequences of that which ye shall have done in this vain life, and shall be repaid for them... How great the number of those who, in bygone ages, have committed the things ye have committed, and who, though superior to you in rank, have, in the end, returned unto dust, and been consigned to their inevitable doom!... Ye shall follow in their wake, and shall be made to enter a habitation wherein none shall be found to befriend or help you... The days of your life shall roll away, and all the things with which ye are occupied, and of which ye boast yourselves, shall perish, and ye shall, most certainly, be summoned by a company of His angels to appear at the spot where the limbs of the entire creation shall be made to tremble, and the flesh of every oppressor to creep... This is the day that shall inevitably come upon you, the hour that none can put back.*”

**42** To the inhabitants of Constantinople, while He lived the life of an exile in their midst, Bahá’u’lláh, in that same Tablet, addressed these words: “*Fear God, ye inhabitants of the City, and sow not the seeds of dissension amongst men... Your days shall pass away as have the days of them who were*

**behooveth**

Required; properly due; obligated.

**precepts**

Teachings; principles; rules; guidelines.

**forsake**

Abandon; desert; leave; disown.

**habitation**

Habitat; environment; locale.

**limbs**

Members; branches; extremities.

**creep**

Move stealthily; slink; sneak.

**midst**

Middle; center.

**dissention**

A disagreement of opinion, especially such as leads to contention or strife.

before you. To dust shall ye return, even as your fathers of old did return.” “We found,” He, moreover, remarks, “upon Our arrival in the City its governors and elders as children gathered about and *disporting* themselves with clay... Our inner eye wept sore over them, and over their *transgressions* and their total disregard of the thing for which they were created... The day is approaching when God will have raised up a people who will call to remembrance Our days, who will tell the tale of Our trials, who will demand the *restitution* of Our rights from them that, without a tittle of evidence, have treated Us with manifest injustice. God assuredly dominateth the lives of them that wronged Us, and is well aware of their doings. He will, most certainly, lay hold on them for their sins. He, verily, is the fiercest of *avengers*.” “Wherefore,” He graciously exhorteth them, “hearken ye unto My speech, and return ye to God and repent, that He, through His grace, may have mercy upon you, may wash away your sins, and forgive your trespasses. The greatness of His mercy surpasseth the fury of His wrath, and His grace encompasseth all who have been called into being and been clothed with the robe of life, be they of the past or of the future.”

**43** And, finally, in the **Lawh-i-Ra'ís** we find these prophetic words recorded: “Hearken, O Chief ... to the Voice of God, the Sovereign, the Help in *Peril*, the *Self-Subsisting*... Thou hast, O Chief, committed that which hath made Muhammad, the Apostle of God, groan in the Most Exalted Paradise. The world hath made thee proud, so much so that thou hast turned away from the Face through Whose brightness the

**disporting**

Amuse or divert oneself; occupy oneself pleasurably. Play unrestrainedly, frolic, make a show of oneself.

**transgressions**

Wrongdoings; misbehaviors; lapses; offenses.

**restitution** Compensation; recompense; amends; refund.

**avengers**

Punishers; righters of wrongs; retaliators.

**peril**

Danger; threat; risk; hazard.

**self-subsisting**

Existing without other assistance.



*Concourse on high hath been illumined. Soon thou shalt find thyself in evident loss... The day is approaching when the Land of Mystery (Adrianople) and what is beside it shall be changed, and shall pass out of the hands of the King, and commotions shall appear, and the voice of lamentation shall be raised, and the evidences of mischief shall be revealed on all sides, and confusion shall spread by reason of that which hath befallen these captives at the hands of the hosts of oppression. The course of things shall be altered, and conditions shall wax so grievous, that the very sands on the desolate hills will moan, and the trees on the mountain will weep, and blood will flow out of all things. Then wilt thou behold the people in sore distress.”*

**44** Thirteen hundred years had to elapse from the death of the Prophet Muhammad ere the illegitimacy of the **institution of the Caliphate**, the founders of which had **usurped** the authority of the lawful successors of the Apostle of God, could be fully and publicly demonstrated. An institution which in its **inception** had trampled upon so **sacred** a right and unchained the forces of so distressful a **schism**, an institution which, in the latter days, had dealt so grievous a blow to a Faith Whose Forerunner was Himself a descendant of the very **Imams** whose authority that institution had repudiated, deserved full well the chastisement that had sealed its fate.

**45** The text of certain Muhammadan traditions, the authenticity of which Muslims themselves recognize, and which have been extensively quoted by **eminent Oriental Bahá'í** scholars and authors, will serve to **corroborate** the argument and illuminate the

**wax**

Expand; increase; grow; swell.

**grievous**

Grave; serious; severe; dire.

**usurped**

Seized; took over; grabbed; commandeered.

**schism** Split; break; division; rift.

**inception**

Beginning; start; origin; launch.

**sacred**

Holy; blessed; hallowed; revered.

**eminent** Well-known; renowned; distinguished; famous.

**oriental**

Belonging to or situated in the eastern part of the sky or (formerly) of a specified country or region. Also (Astrol.), (of a planet) seen in the east or eastern part of the sky, seen before sunrise.

**corroborate**

Confirm; support; agree with; back up.

theme I have attempted to **expound**: “*In the latter days a grievous calamity shall befall My people at the hands of their ruler, a calamity such as no man ever heard to surpass it. So fierce will it be that none can find a shelter. God will then send down One of My descendants, One sprung from My family, Who will fill the earth with equity and justice, even as it hath been filled with injustice and tyranny.*” And, again: “*A day shall be witnessed by My people whereon there will have remained of Islám naught but a name, and of the Qur’an naught but a mere appearance. The doctors of that age shall be the most evil the world hath ever seen. Mischief hath proceeded from them, and on them will it recoil.*” And, again: “*At that hour His malediction shall descend upon you, and your curse shall afflict you, and your religion shall remain an empty word on your tongues. And when these signs appear amongst you, anticipate the day when the red-hot wind will have swept over you, or the day when ye will have been disfigured, or when stones will have rained upon you.*”

**46** “*O people of the Qur’án,*” Bahá’u’lláh, addressing the combined forces of Sunní and Shí’ih Islám, significantly affirms, “*Verily, the Prophet of God, Muhammad, sheddeth tears at the sight of your cruelty. Ye have assuredly followed your evil and corrupt desires, and turned away your face from the light of guidance. Erelong will ye witness the result of your deeds; for the Lord, My God, lieth in wait and is watchful of your behavior... O concourse of Muslim divines! By your deeds the exalted station of*

**expound** Explain; expand on; develop; talk about.

**surpass** Exceed; beat; better; outdo.

**malediction**

Reviling, slander; the condition of being reviled or slandered.

**descend**

Descent; fall; plunge; decline.

**disfigured**

Blemished; flawed; spoiled; stained.

*the people hath been abased, the standard of Islám hath been reversed, and its mighty throne hath fallen.”*

### Deterioration of Christian Institutions

**47** So much for Islám and the crippling blows its leaders and institutions have received—and may yet receive—in this, the first century of the Bahá’í Era. If I have dwelt too long on this theme, if I have, to a **disproportionate** degree, quoted from the sacred writings in support of my argument, it is solely because of my firm **conviction** that these retributive calamities that have rained down upon the foremost oppressor of the Faith of Bahá’u’lláh should rank not only among the stirring occurrences of this Age of Transition, but as some of the most startling and significant events of contemporary history.

**48** Both Sunní and Shí’ih Islám had, through the **convulsions** that had seized them, contributed to the **acceleration** of the disruptive process to which I have previously referred—a process which, by its very nature, is to pave the way for that complete reorganization and unification which the world, in every **aspect** of its life, must achieve. What of Christianity and of the **denominations** with which it stands identified? Can it be said that this process of deterioration that has attacked the fabric of the Religion of Muhammad has failed to exert its **baneful** influence on the institutions associated with the Faith of Jesus Christ? Have these institutions already experienced the impact of these **menacing** forces? Are their

**deteriorates**

Worsen; decline; weaken; go down.

**disproportionate**

Uneven; unequal; inconsistent; unbalanced.

**conviction**

Belief; faith; opinion.

**convulsions**

Fit; spasm; seizure; tremor; paroxysm.

**acceleration**

Speeding; stepping; hastening; hurrying; rushing.

**aspect**

Feature; part; piece; characteristic.

**denominations**

A body of people classed together under the one name; spec. a religious sect or body with distinctive name and organization.

**baneful**

Harmful; bother; curse; blight.

**menacing**

Threatening; frightening; alarming; ominous; scary.

foundations so secure and their vitality so great as to enable them to resist this **onslaught**? Will they, as the confusion of a chaotic world spreads and deepens, fall in turn a prey to their violence? Have the more **orthodox** among them already arisen, and, if not, will they arise, to repel the onset of a Cause which, having pulled down the barriers of Muslim orthodoxy, is now advancing into the heart of Christendom, in both the European and American continents? Would such a resistance sow the seeds of further dissension and confusion, and consequently serve indirectly to hasten the advent of the promised Day?

**49** To these queries we can but partly answer. Time alone can reveal the nature of the role which the institutions directly associated with the Christian Faith are destined to assume in this, the **Formative Period** of the Bahá'í Era, this dark age of transition through which humanity as a whole is passing. Such events as have already **transpired**, however, are of such a nature as can indicate the direction in which these institutions are moving. We can, in some degree, appraise the probable effect which the forces operating both within the Bahá'í Faith and outside it will exert upon them.

**50** That the forces of **irreligion**, of a purely materialistic philosophy, of unconcealed paganism have been unloosed, are now spreading, and, by consolidating themselves, are beginning to invade some of the most powerful Christian institutions of the western world, no unbiased observer can fail to admit.

**onslaught**

Attack; assault; ambush; offensive; blitz.

**onset**

Start; beginning; arrival; commencement.

**orthodox**

Accepted; traditional; approved; conformist.

**transpired**

Happened; took place; came about.

**irreligion**

Lack of religion; hostility to or disregard of religious principles; irreligious conduct.

That these institutions are becoming increasingly **restive**, that a few among them are already dimly aware of the **pervasive** influence of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh, that they will, as their inherent strength **deteriorates** and their discipline relaxes, regard with deepening **dismay** the rise of His New World Order, and will gradually determine to **assail** it, that such an opposition will in turn **accelerate** their decline, few, if any, among those who are attentively watching the progress of His Faith would be **inclined** to question.

**51** *“The vitality of men’s belief in God,” Bahá'u'lláh has testified, “is dying out in every land; nothing short of His wholesome medicine can ever restore it. The **corrosion** of ungodliness is eating into the **vitals** of human society; what else but the **Elixir** of His potent Revelation can cleanse and revive it?” “The world is in **travail**,” He has further written, “and its **agitation** waxeth day by day. Its face is turned towards waywardness and unbelief. Such shall be its **plight** that to disclose it now would not be meet and seemly.”*

**52** This **menace** of secularism that has attacked Islám and is undermining its remaining institutions, that has invaded Persia, has penetrated into India, and raised its triumphant head in Turkey, has already manifested itself in both Europe and America, and is, in varying degrees, and under various forms and designations, challenging the basis of every established religion, and in particular the institutions and communities identified with the Faith of Jesus Christ. It would be no **exaggeration** to say that we are moving into

**restive**

Restless; twitchy; edgy; impatient.

**pervasive**

All-encompassing; enveloping; insidious.

**deteriorates**

Worsen; decline; weaken; go down.

**dismay**

Shock; panic; alarm; sadness; disappointment.

**assail**

Attack; assault; beat; overcome.

**accelerate**

Speed up; hasten; quicken; gather speed.

**inclined**

Tending; apt; liable; prone.

**corrosion**

Decay; rust; deterioration; decomposition.

**vitals**

Organs of the body.

**elixir**

A sovereign remedy; an aromatic solution used as a medicine; the philosopher’s stone.

**travail**

A painful or laborious task as in childbirth.

**agitation**

Shakeup; demonstration; disturbance; protest.

**plight**

Dilemma; troubles; difficulty; quandary.

**menace**

Threat; danger; hazard; peril.

**exaggeration** Overstatement; embroidery; hyperbole.

a period which the future historian will regard as one of the most critical in the history of Christianity.

**53** Already a few among the **protagonists** of the Christian Religion admit the gravity of the situation that confronts them. “A wave of **materialism** is sweeping round the world”; is the testimony of its missionaries, as witnessed by the text of their official reports, “the drive and pressure of modern industrialism, which are penetrating even the forests of Central Africa and the plains of Central Asia, make men everywhere dependent on, and preoccupied with, material things. At home the Church has talked, perhaps too **glibly**, in **pulpit** or on platform of the menace of **secularism**; though even in England we can catch more than a glimpse of its meaning. But to the Church overseas these things are grim **realities**, enemies with which it is at grips... The Church has a new danger to face in land after land—determined and hostile attack. From **Soviet** Russia a definitely anti-religious **Communism** is pushing west into Europe and America, East into Persia, India, China and Japan. It is an economic theory, definitely **harnessed** to disbelief in God. It is a religious irreligion... It has a passionate sense of mission, and is carrying on its anti-God campaign at the Church’s base at home, as well as launching its offensive against its front-line in non-Christian lands. Such a conscious, avowed, organized attack against religion in general and Christianity in particular is something new in history. Equally deliberate in some lands in its determined hostility to Christianity is another form of social and political faith—nationalism. But the

**protagonists**

Characters; heroes; leading roles.

**materialism**

The doctrine that nothing exists except matter and its movements and modifications.

**glibly**

Persuasively; fluently; slickly.

**pulpit**

Platform; stage; podium; stand.

**secularism**

Worldly; material; lay.

**realities**

Realism; authenticity; truth; certainty.

**Soviet**

Belonging or pertaining to the former USSR; generally pertaining to or having a system of government based on Soviets.

**Communism**

A system of government in which the state plans and controls the economy and a single, often authoritarian party holds power.

**harnessed**

Tied together; yoked; attached.

nationalist attack on Christianity, unlike Communism, is often bound up with some form of national religion—with Islám in Persia and Egypt, with Buddhism in Ceylon, while the struggle for communal rights in India is allied with a revival both of Hinduism and Islám.”

**54** I need not attempt in this connection an exposition of the origin and character of those economic theories and political philosophies of the post-war period, that have directly and indirectly exerted, and are still exerting, their pernicious influence on the institutions and beliefs connected with one of the most widely-spread and best organized religious systems of the world. It is with their influence rather than with their origin that I am chiefly concerned. The excessive growth of industrialism and its attendant evils—as the aforementioned quotation bears witness—the aggressive policies initiated and the persistent efforts exerted by the inspirers and organizers of the Communist movement; the intensification of a militant nationalism, associated in certain countries with a systematized work of defamation against all forms of ecclesiastical influence, have no doubt contributed to the de-Christianization of the masses, and been responsible for a notable decline in the authority, the prestige and power of the Church. “The whole conception of God,” the persecutors of the Christian Religion have insistently proclaimed, “is a conception derived from the ancient oriental despotisms. It is a conception quite unworthy of free men.” “Religion,” one of their leaders has asserted, “is an opiate of the people.” “Religion,” declares the text of their official publications, “is a brutalization

**communal**

Shared; common; public; collective; joint; mutual.

**Hinduism**

A system of religious beliefs founded by Krishna.

**exposition**

Explanation; description; clarification; elucidation. Show; exhibit; systematic explanation; interpretation.

**pernicious**

Destructive; harmful; deadly; evil.

**persistent**

Unrelenting; constant; importunate; relentless.

**militant**

Aggressive; radical; rebellious.

**defamation**

Insult; slander; libel; smear; offense.

**conception**

Beginning; start; outset; origin; commencement. Idea; notion; concept; thought; theory; model.

**despotism**

Dictator; tyrant; autocrat; oppressor.

**opiate**

Something that soothes or dulls the senses or causes drowsiness or inaction.

**brutalization**

Render brutal or inhuman; cruel.

of the people. Education must be so directed as to **efface** from the people's minds this **humiliation** and this **idiocy**."

**55** The **Hegelian** philosophy which, in other countries, has, in the form of an **intolerant** and militant nationalism, insisted on **deifying** the state, has inculcated the war-spirit, and **incited** to racial **animosity**, has, likewise, led to a marked weakening of the Church and to a grave **diminution** of its spiritual influence. Unlike the bold offensive which an avowedly atheistic movement had chosen to launch against it, both within the Soviet union and beyond its confines, this nationalistic philosophy, which Christian rulers and governments have upheld, is an attack directed against the Church by those who were previously its professed **adherents**, a **betrayal** of its cause by its own **kith** and **kin**. It was being stabbed by an **alien** and militant **atheism** from without, and by the preachers of a heretical **doctrine** from within. Both of these forces, each operating in its own sphere and using its own weapons and methods, have moreover been greatly assisted and encouraged by the prevailing spirit of modernism, with its emphasis on a purely materialistic philosophy, which, as it diffuses itself, tends increasingly to divorce religion from man's daily life.

**56** The combined effect of these strange and corrupt doctrines, these dangerous and **treacherous** philosophies, has, as was natural, been severely felt by those whose tenets inculcated an opposite and wholly **irreconcilable** spirit and principle. The consequences of the **clash** that inevitably ensued between these contending interests,

**efface**

Wipe out; destroy; rub out; obliterate.

**humiliation**

Disgrace; shame; embarrassment.

**idiocy**

Stupidity; silliness; ridiculousness.

**intolerant**

Bigoted; prejudiced; fanatical.

**deifying**

Make a god of; idolize; worship; glorify.

**incited**

Encouraged; driven; impelled; prompted.

**animosity**

Hatred; ill-will; rancor; enmity.

**diminution**

Decrease; reduction; shrinking; lessening.

**diminution**

Decrease; reduction; shrinking; lessening.

**adherents**

Followers; members; supporters; advocates.

**betrayal**

Disloyalty; unfaithfulness; infidelity.

**kith**

One's friends, acquaintances, neighbors, or fellows; later also kin; one's relatives, one's family.

**kin**

Family; relatives; relations; kinfolk.

**alien**

Unfamiliar; unknown; strange; foreign.

**atheism**

Non-belief; incredulity; skepticism; agnosticism.

**doctrine**

Policy; principle; canon; dogma; guidelines.

**treacherous**

Disloyal; false; deceitful; unfaithful.

**irreconcilable**

Incompatible; conflicting; opposed; clashing.

**clash**

Fight; conflict; disagree; collide.



were, in some cases, disastrous, and the damage that has been wrought **irreparable**. The disestablishment and dismemberment of the Greek Orthodox Church in Russia, following upon the blow which the Church of Rome had sustained as a result of the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy; the commotion that subsequently seized the Catholic Church and **culminated** in its separation from the State in Spain; the persecution of the same Church in Mexico; the **perquisitions**, arrests, **intimidation** and terrorization to which Catholics and Lutherans alike are being subjected in the heart of Europe; the turmoil into which another branch of the Church has been thrown as a result of the military campaign in Africa; the decline that has set in the fortunes of Christian Missions, both Anglican and Presbyterian, in Persia, Turkey, and the Far East; the **ominous** signs that foreshadow serious complications in the **equivocal** and precarious relationships now existing between the **Holy See** and certain nations in the continent of Europe—these stand out as the most striking features of the reverses which, in almost every part of the world, the members and leaders of Christian ecclesiastical institutions have suffered.

**57** That the solidarity of some of these institutions has been **irretrievably** shattered is too apparent for any intelligent observer to mistake or deny. The **cleavage** between the **fundamentalists** and the **liberals** among their adherents is continually widening. Their creeds and **dogmas** have been watered down, and in certain instances ignored and

#### **irreparable**

Permanent; beyond repair; lasting; severe.

#### **culminated**

Ended; concluded; finished; closed.

#### **perquisitions**

The acquiring of something; a thorough or diligent search, especially one undertaken officially.

#### **intimidation**

Threats; pressure; bullying; fear; terrorization.

#### **ominous**

Threatening; warning; gloomy; worrying.

#### **equivocal**

Vague; ambiguous; ambivalent; oblique; unclear.

#### **irretrievably**

Forever; permanently; for all time.

#### **cleavage**

Split; divide; fissure.

#### **fundamentalist**

The strict maintenance of traditional orthodox religious beliefs or doctrines; esp. belief in the inerrancy of Scripture and literal acceptance of the creeds as fundamentals of Protestant Christianity

#### **liberals**

Favorable to or respectful of individual rights and freedoms; specially in politics; favoring free trade and gradual political and social reform that tends towards individual freedom or democracy.

#### **dogmas**

Creeds; doctrines; codes of belief; canons; tenets.

discarded. Their hold upon human conduct is loosening, and the personnel of their ministries is **dwindling** in number and in influence. The **timidity** and insincerity of their preachers are, in several instances, being exposed. Their endowments have, in some countries, disappeared, and the force of their religious training has declined. Their temples have been partly deserted and destroyed, and an **oblivion** of God, of His teachings and of His Purpose, has enfeebled and heaped humiliation upon them.

**58** Might not this disintegrating tendency, from which Sunnī and Shī'ih Islām have so conspicuously suffered, unloose, as it reaches its climax, still further calamities upon the various denominations of the Christian Church? In what manner and how rapidly this process, which has already set in, will develop the future alone can reveal. Nor can it, at the present time, be estimated to what extent will the attacks which a still powerful clergy may yet launch against the strongholds of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh in the West **accentuate** this decline and widen the range of **inescapable** disasters.

**59** If Christianity wishes and expects to serve the world in the present crisis, writes a minister of the Presbyterian Church in America, it must "cut back through Christianity to Christ, back through the centuries-old religion about Jesus to the original religion of Jesus." Otherwise, he significantly adds, "the spirit of Christ will live in institutions other than our own."

**60** So marked a decline in the strength and cohesion of the elements constituting

**dwindling**

Declining; decreasing; diminishing; falling.

**timidity**

Nervousness; shyness; coyness; diffidence.

**oblivion**

Nothingness; void.

**inescapable**

Certain; inevitable; bound to happen.

**accentuate**

Stress; highlight; play up; emphasize.

**inescapable**

Certain; inevitable; bound to happen.

Christian society has led, in its turn, as we might well anticipate, to the emergence of an increasing number of obscure cults, of strange and new worships, of ineffective philosophies, whose **sophisticated** doctrines have intensified the confusion of a troubled age. In their tenets and pursuits they may be said to reflect and bear witness to the revolt, the discontent, and the confused aspirations of the **disillusioned** masses that have deserted the cause of the Christian churches and **seceded** from their membership.

**61** A parallel might almost be drawn between these confused and confusing systems of thought that are the direct outcome of the helplessness and confusion afflicting the Christian Faith and the great variety of popular **cults**, of fashionable and evasive philosophies which flourished in the opening centuries of the Christian Era, and which attempted to absorb and pervert the state religion of that Roman people. The pagan worshipers who constituted, at that time, the bulk of the population of the Western Roman Empire, found themselves surrounded, and in certain instances menaced, by the prevailing **sect** of the **Neo-Platonists**, by the followers of nature religions, by **Gnostic** philosophers, by **Philonism**, **Mithraism**, the adherents of the Alexandrian cult, and a **multitude** of kindred sects and beliefs, in much the same way as the defenders of the Christian Faith, the preponderating religion of the western world, are realizing, in the first century of the Bahá'í Era, how their influence is being undermined by a flood of conflicting beliefs, practices and tendencies which their own **bankruptcy** had helped to create. It was, however, this same Christian Religion, which

**sophisticated**

Highly developed; difficult; complicated.

**disillusioned** Cynical; disheartened; disappointed; disenchanting.

**seceded**

Break away; separate; split; withdraw; pull out.

**cults**

Sects; religious groups; factions; parties.

**sect**

Faction; division; cult; party.

**Neo-Platonists**

Those who follow the philosophy which emphasizes the distinction between a supposed eternal world and the changing physical world, and combines this with a mystic possibility of union with the supreme being from which all reality is supposed to derive.

**Gnostic**

A member of a heretical Christian sect of the 1st to the 3rd centuries C.E. who claimed gnosis. Relating to knowledge; cognitive; intellectual

**Philonism**

Of or pertaining to the Jewish philosopher Philo, who wrote and taught in Alexandria a20 BC-AD 40.

**Mithraism**

The worship of the god Mithras, the religion or cult of followers of Mithras.

**multitude**

Huge number; large amount; mass.

**bankruptcy**

Ruin; liquidation; impoverishment; ruin.

has now fallen into such a state of impotence, that eventually proved itself capable of sweeping away the institutions of paganism and of swamping and suppressing the cults that had flourished in that age.

**62** Such institutions as have strayed far from the spirit and teachings of Jesus Christ must of necessity, as the **embryonic** World Order of Bahá'u'lláh takes shape and unfolds, recede into the background, and make way for the progress of the divinely-ordained institutions that stand inextricably interwoven with His teachings. The indwelling Spirit of God which, in the Apostolic Age of the Church, animated its members, the **pristine** purity of its teachings, the primitive brilliancy of its light, will, no doubt, be reborn and revived as the inevitable consequence of this redefinition of its fundamental verities, and the **clarification** of its original purpose.

**63** For the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh—if we would faithfully appraise it—can never, and in no aspect of its teachings, be at variance, much less conflict, with the purpose animating, or the authority invested in, the Faith of Jesus Christ. This glowing **tribute** which Bahá'u'lláh Himself has been moved to pay to the Author of the Christian Religion stands as sufficient testimony to the truth of this central principle of Bahá'í belief:—  
*”Know thou that when the Son of Man yielded up His breath to God, the whole creation wept with a great weeping. By sacrificing Himself, however, a fresh capacity was infused into all created things. Its evidences, as witnessed in all the peoples of the earth, are now manifest before thee. The deepest wisdom which the **sages** have **uttered**, the profoundest*

**embryonic**

Developing; emergent; nascent; budding.

**pristine**

immaculate; perfect; untouched; like new.

**clarification**

Explanation; amplification; explaining.

**tribute**

Compliment; honor; praise; homage.

**sages**

Wise; sagacious; learned; clever.

**uttered**

Spoken; voiced; expressed.

*learning which any mind hath unfolded, the arts which the ablest hands have produced, the influence exerted by the most potent of rulers, are but manifestations of the quickening power released by His transcendent, His all-pervasive and resplendent Spirit. We testify that when He came into the world, He shed the splendor of His glory upon all created things. Through Him the leper recovered from the leprosy of perversity and ignorance. Through Him the unchaste and wayward were healed. Through His power, born of Almighty God, the eyes of the blind were opened, and the soul of the sinner sanctified... He it is Who purified the world. Blessed is the man who, with a face beaming with light, hath turned towards Him.”*

### **Signs of Moral Downfall**

**64** No more, I believe, need be said of the decline of religious institutions, the disintegration of which constitutes so important an aspect of the Formative Period of the Bahá'í Era. Islám had both as a result of the rising tide of secularism and in direct consequence of its declared and persistent hostility to the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh sunk to a depth of **abasement** rarely attained in its history. Christianity had, likewise, owing to causes not wholly dissimilar to those operating in the case of its sister Faith, steadily weakened, and was contributing, in an increasing measure, its share to the process of general disintegration—a process that must necessarily precede the fundamental reconstruction of human society.

#### **leper**

A person who is shunned, esp. on moral grounds; an outcast.

#### **leprosy**

Moral corruption or contagion

#### **unchaste**

Impure; unclean; lascivious?

#### **abasement**

Lower; demean; degrade; belittle; humiliate.

**65** The signs of moral downfall, as distinct from the evidences of decay in religious institutions, would appear to be no less noticeable and significant. The decline that has set in in the fortunes of Islamic and Christian institutions may be said to have had its counterpart in the life and conduct of the individuals that compose them. In whichever direction we turn our gaze, no matter how **cursory** our observation of the doings and sayings of the present generation, we can not fail to be struck by the evidences of moral decadence which, in their individual lives no less than in their collective capacity, men and women around us exhibit.

**66** There can be no doubt that the decline of religion as a social force, of which the deterioration of religious institutions is but an external phenomenon, is chiefly responsible for so grave, so conspicuous an evil. “*Religion,*” writes Bahá’u’lláh, “*is the greatest of all means for the establishment of order in the world and for the peaceful contentment of all that dwell therein. The weakening of the pillars of religion hath strengthened the hands of the ignorant and made them bold and arrogant. Verily I say, whatsoever hath lowered the lofty station of religion hath increased the waywardness of the wicked, and the result cannot be but **anarchy**.*” “*Religion,*” He, in another Tablet, has stated, “*is a **radiant** light and an impregnable stronghold for the protection and welfare of the peoples of the world, for the fear of God impelleth man to hold fast to that which is good, and **shun** all evil. Should the lamp of religion be obscured, chaos and confusion will ensue, and the lights of fairness, of justice, of **tranquillity** and peace*

**cursory**

Brief; hasty; fleeting; superficial; perfunctory.

**radiant**

Bright; luminous; brilliant; shining.

**anarchy**

Disorder; chaos; lawlessness; rebellion.

**shun**

Avoid; spurn; reject; eschew.

**tranquillity**

Calm; peace; stillness; hush.

*cease to shine.” “Know thou,” He, in yet another connection, has written, “that they who are truly wise have likened the world unto the human temple. As the body of man needeth a garment to clothe it, so the body of mankind must needs be adorned with the mantle of justice and wisdom. Its robe is the Revelation vouchsafed unto it by God.”*

**67** No wonder, therefore, that when, as a result of human perversity, the light of religion is quenched in men’s hearts, and the divinely appointed Robe, designed to adorn the human temple, is deliberately discarded, a deplorable decline in the fortunes of humanity immediately sets in, bringing in its wake all the evils which a wayward soul is capable of revealing. The **perversion** of human nature, the degradation of human conduct, the corruption and **dissolution** of human institutions, reveal themselves, under such circumstances, in their worst and most revolting aspects. Human character is **debased**, confidence is shaken, the nerves of discipline are relaxed, the voice of human **conscience** is stilled, the sense of decency and shame is obscured, conceptions of duty, of solidarity, of **reciprocity** and loyalty are distorted, and the very feeling of peacefulness, of joy and of hope is gradually extinguished.

**68** Such, we might well admit, is the state which individuals and institutions alike are approaching. “*No two men,*” Bahá’u’lláh, lamenting the plight of an erring humanity, has written, “*can be found who may be said to be outwardly and inwardly united. The evidences of discord and malice are apparent everywhere, though all were made for*

**mantle**

Covering; veil; cloak; layer.

**perversion**

Parody; distortion; falsification.

**dissolution**

Closure; disbanding; ending; termination.

**debased**

Dishonored; sullied; despoiled; violated.

**conscience**

Sense of right & wrong; principles; ethics.

**reciprocity**

A mutual exchange of advantages or privileges as a basis for relations between two systems or people.

**malice**

Hatred; spite; nastiness; cruelty.

*harmony and union.” “How long,” He, in the same Tablet, exclaims, “will humanity persist in its waywardness? How long will injustice continue? How long is chaos and confusion to reign amongst men? How long will discord agitate the face of society? The winds of despair are, alas, blowing from every direction, and the strife that divideth and afflicteth the human race is daily increasing.”*

**69** The **recrudescence** of religious intolerance, of racial animosity, and of **patriotic** arrogance; the increasing evidences of selfishness, of suspicion, of fear and of **fraud**; the spread of terrorism, of lawlessness, of drunkenness and of crime; the unquenchable thirst for, and the feverish **pursuit** after, earthly **vanities**, riches and pleasures; the weakening of family solidarity; the **laxity** in parental control; the **lapse** into **luxurious indulgence**; the irresponsible attitude towards marriage and the consequent rising tide of divorce; the degeneracy of art and music, the infection of literature, and the corruption of the press; the extension of the influence and activities of those “prophets of decadence” who advocate **companionate** marriage, who preach the philosophy of nudism, who call **modesty** an intellectual **fiction**, who refuse to regard the **procreation** of children as the sacred and primary purpose of marriage, who **denounce** religion as an opiate of the people, who would, if given free rein, lead back the human race to **barbarism**, chaos, and ultimate extinction—these appear as the outstanding characteristics of a decadent society, a society that must either be reborn or perish.

**recrudescence**

A recurrence, especially of state or fact of breaking out afresh a disease, a wound, or something unpleasant.

**patriotic**

Loyal; nationalistic; devoted; partisan.

**fraud**

Scam; con; hoax; deception.

**pursuit**

Chase; hunt; quest; search.

**vanities**

Foolishness; futile; without value; worthlessness.

**laxity**

Lack of discipline; tolerance; soft attitude.

**lapse** A slip of the memory, the tongue, the pen; a mistake, a slight error.

**luxurious**

Lavish; sumptuous; opulent; grand.

**Indulgence**

Treat-a person-with excessive kindness. Bestow, grant as a favour; allow or concede as an indulgence.

**companionate**

Designating a proposed form of marriage providing for divorce by mutual consent without any further legal obligations.

**modesty**

Reserve; humility; reticence.

**fiction**

Falsehood; lie; untruth; fabrication.

**procreation**

Breeding; reproduction; proliferation.

**denounce** Condemn; criticize; censure; accuse; deplore.

**barbarism** Uncivilized nature or condition; uncultured ignorance; absence of culture.



## Breakdown of Political and Economic Structure

**70** Politically a similar decline, a no less noticeable evidence of disintegration and confusion, can be discovered in the age we live in—the age which a future historian might well recognize to have been the preamble to the Great Age, whose golden days we can as yet but dimly visualize.

**71** The passionate and violent happenings that have, in recent years, strained to almost the point of complete breakdown the political and economic structure of society are too numerous and complex to attempt, within the limitations of this general survey, to arrive at an adequate estimate of their character. Nor have these tribulations, grievous as they have been, seemed to have reached their climax, and exerted the full force of their destructive power. The whole world, wherever and however we survey it, offers us the sad and pitiful **spectacle** of a **vast**, an enfeebled, and **moribund** organism, which is being torn politically and **strangulated** economically by forces it has ceased to either control or comprehend. **The Great Depression**, the aftermath of the severest ordeals humanity had ever experienced, the disintegration of the Versailles system, the recrudescence of militarism in its most menacing aspects, the failure of vast experiments and new-born institutions to safeguard the peace and tranquillity of peoples, classes and nations, have bitterly disillusioned humanity and **prostrated** its spirits. Its hopes are, for the most part, shattered, its vitality is **ebbing**, its life strangely **disordered**, its unity severely compromised.

### spectacle

Sight; display; show; scene; vision.

### vast

Huge; enormous; gigantic; immense.

### moribund

Declining; waning; on its last legs; past its best.

### strangulated

Choked, stifled, suffocated.

### prostrated

Face down; horizontal; level to the ground.

### ebbing

Fade; diminish; recede; fail; disappear.

### disordered

Chaotic; messy; muddled; lawless; anarchic.

72 On the continent of Europe **inveterate** hatreds and increasing **rivalries** are once more aligning its ill-fated peoples and nations into combinations destined to **precipitate** the most awful and implacable tribulations that mankind throughout its long record of martyrdom has suffered. On the North American continent economic distress, industrial disorganization, widespread discontent at the **abortive** experiments designed to readjust an ill-balanced economy, and restlessness and fear inspired by the possibility of political **entanglements** in both Europe and Asia, portend the approach of what may well prove to be one of the most critical phases of the history of the American **Republic**. Asia, still to a great extent in the grip of one of the severest trials she has, in her recent history, experienced, finds herself menaced on her eastern confines by the onset of forces that threaten to intensify the struggles which the growing nationalism and industrialization of her emancipated races must ultimately **engender**. In the heart of Africa, there blazes the fire of an **atrocious and bloody war**—a war which, whatever its outcome, is destined to exert, through its world-wide **repercussions**, a most disturbing influence on the races and colored nations of mankind.

73 With no less than ten million people under arms, drilled and instructed in the use of the most **abominable** engines of destruction that science has devised; with thrice that number **chafing** and fretting at the rule of alien races and governments; with an equally vast army of embittered citizens **impotent** to **procure** for themselves the material goods and

**inveterate**

Chronic; confirmed; hardened; ingrained.

**rivalries**

Competition; opposition; contention; enmity.

**precipitate**

Hasten; bring; cause; trigger.

**abortive**

Futile; bungled; unsuccessful; failed.

**entanglements**

A thing that entangles; a complication, an embarrassment.

**republic**

State; nation; democracy.

**engender**

Produce; cause; create; stimulate; bring out.

**repercussions**

Consequence; effect; outcome; aftermath.

**abominable**

Awful; vile; horrible; terrible.

**chafing**

Rubbing; roughness; rasping; resistance.

**impotent**

Powerless; weak; helpless; incapable.

**procure**

Obtain; acquire; secure; get.

necessities which others are deliberately destroying; with a still greater mass of human beings groaning under the burden of ever-mounting armaments, and **impoverished** by the virtual collapse of international trade—with evils such as these, humanity would seem to be definitely entering the outer fringes of the most agonizing phase of its existence.

**74** Is it to be wondered at, that in the course of a recent statement made by one of the outstanding Ministers in Europe this warning should have been deliberately uttered: “If war should break out again on a major scale in Europe, it must bring the collapse of civilization as we know it in its wake. In the words of the late **Lord Bryce**, ‘If you don’t end war, war will end you.’” “Poor Europe is in a state of **neurasthenia**...”, is the testimony of one of the most outstanding figures among its present-day dictators. “It has lost its **recuperative** power, the vital force of cohesion, of **synthesis**. Another war would destroy us.” “It is likely,” writes one of the most eminent and learned **dignitaries** of the Christian Church, “there will have to be one more great conflict in Europe to definitely establish once and for all an international authority. This conflict will be the most horrible of horrors, and possibly this generation will be called on to sacrifice hundreds of thousands of lives.”

**75** The disastrous failure of both the Disarmament and Economic Conferences; the obstacles confronting the negotiations for the limitation of Naval armaments; the withdrawal of two of the most powerful and

**impoverished**

Poor; broke; involvement; hard-up.

**neurasthenia**

An ill-defined medical condition characterized by lassitude, fatigue, headache, and irritability, associated chiefly with emotional disturbance.

**recuperative**

Recovery; convalescent; restorative.

**synthesis**

Mixture; fusion; combination; blend.

**dignitaries**

Notable; VIP; celebrity; worthy; luminary.

heavily armed nations of the world from the activities and membership of the **League** of Nations; the **ineptitude** of the **parliamentary** system of government as witnessed by recent developments in Europe and America; the inability of the leaders and exponents of the **Communist movement** to vindicate the much **vaunted** principle of the **Dictatorship of the Proletariat**; the perils and **privations** to which the rulers of the **Totalitarian** states have, in recent years, exposed their subjects—all these demonstrate, beyond the shadow of a doubt, the impotence of present-day institutions to **avert** the calamities with which human society is being increasingly threatened. What else remains, a **bewildered** generation may well ask, that can repair the cleavage that is constantly widening, and which may, at any time, engulf it?

**76** Beset on every side by the cumulative evidences of disintegration, of turmoil and of bankruptcy, serious-minded men and women, in almost every walk of life, are beginning to doubt whether society, as it is now organized, can, through its unaided efforts, **extricate** itself from the slough into which it is steadily sinking. Every system, short of the unification of the human race, has been tried, repeatedly tried, and been found wanting. Wars again and again have been fought, and conferences without number have met and deliberated. Treaties, pacts and covenants have been painstakingly negotiated, concluded and revised. Systems of government have been patiently tested, have been continually recast and superseded. Economic plans of reconstruction have been carefully devised, and **meticulously** executed. And yet crisis has succeeded crisis, and the

**league**

Association; group; union; club.

**ineptitude**

Incompetence; ineffectiveness; Lack of ability; uselessness.

**parliamentary**

Of, pertaining to, or resembling a parliament; belonging to a parliament.

**vaunted**

Boasted; bragged about; vainglory.

**proletariat**

Wage earners; working class; masses.

**privations**

Hardships; adversities; miseries.

**totalitarian**

Authoritarian; oppressive; autocratic.

**avert**

Avoid; prevent; turn away.

**bewildered**

Confused; dazed; bemused; baffled.

**extricate**

Extract; get out; remove; free; rescue.

**meticulously**

Carefully; thoroughly; particularly.

rapidity with which a perilously unstable world is declining has been correspondingly accelerated. A yawning gulf threatens to involve in one common disaster both the satisfied and dissatisfied nations, democracies and dictatorships, capitalists and wage-earners, Europeans and Asiatics, Jew and Gentile, white and colored. An angry Providence, the cynic might well observe, has abandoned a hapless planet to its fate, and fixed irrevocably its doom. Sore-tried and disillusioned, humanity has no doubt lost its orientation, and would seem to have lost as well its faith and hope. It is hovering, unshepherded and visionless, on the brink of disaster. A sense of fatality seems to pervade it. An everdeepening gloom is settling on its fortunes as she recedes further and further from the outer fringes of the darkest zone of its agitated life and penetrates its very heart.

77 And yet while the shadows are continually deepening, might we not claim that gleams of hope, flashing intermittently on the international horizon, appear at times to relieve the darkness that encircles humanity? Would it be untrue to maintain that in a world of unsettled faith and disturbed thought, a world of steadily mounting armaments, of unquenchable hatreds and rivalries, the progress, however fitful, of the forces working in harmony with the spirit of the age can already be discerned? Though the great outcry raised by post-war nationalism is growing louder and more insistent every day, the League of Nations is as yet in its embryonic state, and the storm clouds that are gathering may for a time totally eclipse

yawning

Deep; gaping; wide; open.

gulf

Abyss; chasm; gap; hollow.

cynic

Skeptic; doubter; detractor; pessimist.

hapless

Unfortunate; unlucky; miserable.

irrevocably

Once and for all; forever; irreversibly.

unshepherded

Unguided; undirected; not accompanied by.

brink

Edge; rim; lip.

fatality

Fate; casualty; fatal accident; death.

pervade

Pass through; saturate; infuse.

agitated

Restless; troubled; disturbed; stressed.

intermittently

Irregularly; now and then; occasionally.

relieve

Ease; allay; reduce; mitigate.

eclipse

Overshadow; overpower; outshine; outdo.

its powers and **obliterate** its machinery, yet the direction in which the institution itself is operating is most significant. The voices that have been raised ever since its inception, the efforts that have been exerted, the work that has already been accomplished, foreshadow the triumphs which this presently constituted institution, or any other body that may **supersede** it, is destined to achieve.

### **Bahá'u'lláh's Principle of Collective Security**

**78** A general Pact on security has been the central purpose towards which these efforts have, ever since the League was born, tended to **converge**. The Treaty of Guarantee which, in the initial stages of its development, its members had considered and discussed; the **debate** on the **Geneva Protocol**, the discussion of which, at a later period, aroused among the nations, both within the League and outside it, such fierce **controversy**; the **subsequent proposal** for a United States of Europe and for the economic unification of that continent; and last but not least the policy of sanctions initiated by its members, may be regarded as the most significant landmarks in its **checkered** history. That no less than fifty nations of the world, all members of the League of Nations, should have, after mature deliberation, recognized and been led to pronounce their **verdict** against an act of aggression which in their judgment has been deliberately committed by one of their fellow-members, one of the foremost Powers of Europe; that they should have, for the most part, agreed to impose collectively sanctions

#### **obliterate**

Wipe out; destroy; eliminate; demolish.

#### **supersede**

Succeed; supplant; replace; surpass.

#### **converge**

Meet; join; unite; congregate.

#### **debate**

Discuss; argue; dispute; deliberate; contest.

#### **protocol**

Procedure; etiquette; set of rules; practice.

#### **controversy**

Argument; disagreement; debate; storm.

#### **subsequent**

Following; succeeding; ensuing; later.

#### **proposal**

Suggestion; offer; tender; pitch.

#### **checkered**

Marked by great changes in fortune; varied.

#### **verdict**

Decision; judgment; finding; result.

on the **condemned aggressor**, and should have succeeded in carrying out, to a very great measure, their decision, is no doubt an event without parallel in human history. For the first time in the history of humanity the system of collective security, foreshadowed by Bahá'u'lláh and explained by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, has been seriously envisaged, discussed and tested. For the first time in history it has been officially recognized and publicly stated that for this system of collective security to be effectively established strength and **elasticity** are both essential—strength involving the use of an adequate force to ensure the efficacy of the proposed system, and elasticity to enable the machinery that has been devised to meet the **legitimate** needs and aspirations of its **aggrieved** upholders. For the first time in human history tentative efforts have been exerted by the nations of the world to assume collective responsibility, and to supplement their verbal pledges by actual preparation for collective action. And again, for the first time in history, a movement of public opinion has manifested itself in support of the verdict which the leaders and representatives of nations have pronounced, and for securing collective action in **pursuance** of such a decision.

**79** How clear, how prophetic, must sound the words uttered by Bahá'u'lláh in the light of recent international developments:—"*Be united, O concourse of the sovereigns of the world, for thereby will the tempest of discord be stilled amongst you, and your peoples find rest. Should any one among you take up arms*

**elasticity**

Suppleness; spring; softness; stretch; flexibility.

**legitimate**

Lawful; legal; genuine; valid.

**aggrieved**

Hurt; angry; upset; pained; injured.

**pursuance**

The action of pursuing in order to catch; that which follows or is consequent upon a thing, a consequence.

*against another, rise ye all against him, for this is naught but manifest justice.” “The time must come,” He, foreshadowing the tentative efforts that are now being made, has written, “when the imperative necessity for the holding of a vast, an all-embracing assemblage of men will be universally realized. The rulers and kings of the earth must needs attend it, and, participating in its deliberations, must consider such ways and means as will lay the foundations of the world’s Great Peace among men... Should any king take up arms against another, all should unitedly arise and prevent him.”*

**80** “The sovereigns of the world,” writes ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in elaboration of this theme, “*must conclude a binding treaty, and establish a covenant, the provisions of which shall be sound, inviolable and definite. They must proclaim it to all the world, and obtain for it the sanction of all the human race... All the forces of humanity must be mobilized to insure the stability and permanence of this Most Great Covenant... The fundamental principle underlying this solemn Pact should be so fixed that if any government later violate any one of its provisions, all the governments on earth should arise to reduce it to utter submission, nay the human race as a whole should resolve, with every power at its disposal, to destroy that government.*”

**81** There can be no doubt whatever that what has already been accomplished, significant and unexampled though it is in the history of mankind, still immeasurably falls short of the essential requirements of the system which these words foreshadow. The League of Nations, its opponents will

**conclude**

Deduce; assume; presume; decide; suppose.

**inviolable**

Unbreakable; firm; unchallengeable.

**sanction**

Authorize; permit; approve; allow.



observe, still lacks the universality which is the prerequisite of abiding success in the **efficacious** settlement of international disputes. The United States of America, its begetter, has repudiated it, and is still holding **aloof**, while Germany and Japan, who ranked among its most powerful supporters, have abandoned its cause and withdrawn from its membership. The decisions arrived at and the action thus far taken, others will maintain, should be regarded as no more than a magnificent gesture, rather than a **conclusive** evidence of international solidarity. Still others may **contend** that though such a verdict has been pronounced, and such pledges been given, collective action must, in the end, fail in its ultimate purpose, and that the League itself will perish and be **submerged** by the flood of tribulations destined to overtake the whole race. Be that as it may, the significance of the steps already taken cannot be ignored. Whatever the present **status** of the League or the outcome of its historic verdict, whatever the trials and reverses which, in the immediate future, it may have to face and sustain, the fact must be recognized that so important a decision marks one of the most **distinctive milestones** on the long and arduous road that must lead it to its goal, the stage at which the oneness of the whole body of nations will be made the ruling principle of international life.

**82** This historic step, however, is but a faint **glimmer** in the darkness that envelops an agitated humanity. It may well prove to be no more than a mere flash, a **fugitive** gleam, in the midst of an ever-deepening confusion. The process of disintegration must **inexorably** continue, and its corrosive influence must penetrate deeper and deeper into the very core

**efficacious**

Effective; efficient; effectual; successful.

**aloof**

To hold oneself above others. To keep one's distance.

**arduous**

Hard; difficult; tough; demanding.

**conclusive**

Final; closing; concluding; last; ultimate.

**contend**

Argue; assert; insist; maintain; declare.

**submerged**

Flooded; inundated; underwater; sunken.

**status**

Rank; position; standing; grade.

**distinctive**

Characteristic; individual; unique; distinct.

**milestones**

Landmark; highlight; sign; signpost.

**glimmer**

Twinkle; shine; gleam; reflect.

**fugitive**

Moving from place to place; flitting, vagrant.

**inexorably**

Relentlessly; unalterably; unavoidably.

of a crumbling age. Much suffering will still be required ere the contending nations, creeds, classes and races of mankind are **fused** in the **crucible** of universal affliction, and are forged by the fires of a fierce **ordeal** into one organic commonwealth, one vast, unified, and harmoniously functioning system. Adversities unimaginably **appalling**, undreamed of crises and **upheavals**, war, **famine**, and **pestilence**, might well combine to engrave in the soul of an unheeding generation those truths and principles which it has disdained to recognize and follow. A **paralysis** more painful than any it has yet experienced must creep over and further afflict the fabric of a broken society ere it can be rebuilt and regenerated.

**83** “*The civilization,*” writes Bahá’u’lláh, “*so often **vaunted** by the learned exponents of arts and sciences will, if allowed to overleap the bounds of moderation, bring great evil upon men... If carried to **excess**, civilization will prove as **prolific** a source of evil as it had been of goodness when kept within the restraints of **moderation**... The day is approaching when its flame will **devour** the cities, when the Tongue of **Grandeur** will proclaim: ‘The Kingdom is God’s, the Almighty, the All-Praised!’” “*From the moment the **Súriy-i-Ra’ís** (Tablet to Ra’ís) was revealed,*” He further explains, “*until the present day, neither hath the world been **tranquillized**, nor have the hearts of its peoples been at rest... Its sickness is approaching the stage of utter hopelessness, inasmuch as the true Physician is debarred from administering the remedy, whilst unskilled practitioners are regarded with favor, and are accorded full freedom to act.**

**fused**

Compound; merged; combined.

**crucible**

A vessel used for melting materials at high temperatures.

**ordeal**

Trial; torment; suffering; test.

**appalling**

Awful; terrible; dreadful; abysmal.

**upheavals**

Disturbance; turmoil; disorder; confusion.

**famine**

Food shortage; scarcity; want; dearth.

**paralysis**

Loss of the ability to move a part of the body, as a result of disease of or injury to a part of the nervous system.

**vaunted**

Boasted; bragged about; vainglory.

**excess**

Overindulgence; intemperance; immoderation.

**prolific**

Abundant; plentiful; copious; profuse.

**moderation** Restraint; self-control; control; temperance.

**devour**

Consume; demolish; dispose of; gulp down.

**grandeur**

Splendor; majesty; dignity; greatness.

**tranquillized**

Calmed; at peace; soothing; restful.

*The dust of **sedition** hath clouded the hearts of men, and blinded their eyes. Erelong they will perceive the consequences of what their hands have wrought in the Day of God.”* “*This is the Day,*” He again has written, “*whereon the earth shall tell out her **tidings**. The workers of **iniquity** are her burdens... The Crier hath cried out, and men have been torn away, so great hath been the fury of His wrath. The people of the left hand sigh and **bemoan**. The people of the right abide in noble habitations: they **quaff** the Wine that is life indeed from the hands of the All-Merciful, and are, verily, the blissful.”*

## Community of the Most Great Name

**84** Who else can be the blissful if not the community of the Most Great Name, whose world-embracing, continually consolidating activities constitute the one integrating process in a world whose institutions, **secular** as well as religious, are for the most part dissolving? They indeed are “*the people of the right,*” whose “*noble habitation*” is fixed on the foundations of the World Order of Bahá’u’lláh—the Ark of everlasting salvation in this most grievous Day. Of all the kindreds of the earth they alone can recognize, amidst the **welter** of a **tempestuous** age, the Hand of the Divine Redeemer that traces its course and controls its destinies. They alone are aware of the silent growth of that orderly world polity whose fabric they themselves are weaving.

**85** Conscious of their high calling, confident in the society building power which their Faith possesses, they press forward, undeterred and undismayed, in their efforts

**sedition**

Agitation; treason; subversion; troublemaking.

**tidings**

News; report; word; communication.

**iniquity**

Evil; sin; vice; wickedness.

**bemoan**

Lament; bewail; regret; mourn.

**quaff**

Drink; swill; imbibe; guzzle.

**secular**

Worldly; material; lay.

**welter**

Flurry; jumble; mass; spate.

**tempestuous**

Stormy; rough; turbulent; windy.

to fashion and perfect the necessary instruments wherein the embryonic World Order of Bahá' u'lláh can mature and develop. It is this building process, slow and **unobtrusive**, to which the life of the world-wide Bahá'í Community is wholly consecrated, that constitutes the one hope of a stricken society. For this process is **actuated** by the generating influence of God's changeless Purpose, and is evolving within the framework of the Administrative Order of His Faith.

**86** In a world the structure of whose political and social institutions is impaired, whose vision is **befogged**, whose conscience is bewildered, whose religious systems have become **anemic** and lost their virtue, this healing Agency, this **leavening** Power, this cementing Force, intensely alive and all-pervasive, has been taking shape, is **crystallizing** into institutions, is mobilizing its forces, and is preparing for the spiritual conquest and the complete redemption of mankind. Though the society which **incarnates** its ideals be small, and its direct and **tangible** benefits as yet inconsiderable, yet the potentialities with which it has been endowed, and through which it is destined to regenerate the individual and rebuild a broken world, are **incalculable**.

**87** For well nigh a century it has, amid the noise and **tumult** of a **distracted** age, and despite the **incessant** persecutions to which its leaders, institutions, and followers have been subjected, succeeded in preserving its identity, in reinforcing its stability and strength, in maintaining its organic unity, in preserving the **integrity** of its laws and its principles, in erecting its defenses, and in

**unobtrusive**

Low profile; discreet; inconspicuous.

**actuated**

Start; trigger; activate; set in motion.

**befogged**

Obscured; confused; unclear.

**anemic**

Weak; feeble; pale; colorless.

**leavening**

Permeate with a transforming influence; imbue or mingle with some tempering or modifying element. Formerly also (rare), debase or corrupt by admixture.

**crystallizing**

Assuming permanent form or shape.

**incarnate**

Embodied; made flesh; alive; in person.

**tangible**

Actual; concrete; substantial; plain.

**incalculable**

Of an amount or number too great for calculation. Unable to be estimated or forecast.

**tumult**

Uproar; clamor; din; turmoil.

**distracted**

Preoccupied; sidetracked; diverted; unfocused.

**incessant**

Nonstop; continual; relentless; constant; persistent.

**integrity**

Honesty; truth; honor; uprightness.

extending and consolidating its institutions. Numerous and powerful have been the forces that have **schemed**, both from within and from without, in lands both far and near, to **quench** its light and abolish its holy name. Some have **apostatized** from its principles, and betrayed ignominiously its cause. Others have hurled against it the fiercest anathemas which the embittered leaders of any ecclesiastical institution are able to pronounce. Still others have heaped upon it the afflictions and humiliations which sovereign authority can alone, in the **plenitude** of its power, inflict.

**88** The utmost its avowed and secret enemies could hope to achieve was to **retard** its growth and obscure momentarily its purpose. What they actually accomplished was to purge and purify its life, to stir it to still greater depths, to **galvanize** its soul, to **prune** its institutions, and cement its unity. A schism, a permanent cleavage in the vast body of its adherents, they could never create.

**89** They who betrayed its cause, its **lukewarm** and faint-hearted supporters, withered away and dropped as dead leaves, powerless to cloud its radiance or to **imperil** its structure. Its most implacable adversaries, they who assailed it from without, were hurled from power, and, in the most astonishing fashion, met their doom. Persia had been the first to **repress** and oppose it. Its monarchs had miserably fallen, their dynasty had collapsed, their name was **execrated**, the hierarchy that had been their ally and had propped their declining state, had been utterly discredited. Turkey, which had **thrice banished its Founder** and inflicted on Him cruel and life-long imprisonment, had passed

**schemed**

Plan; method; format; design.

**quench**

Slake; satisfy; satiate; reduce.

**apostatized**

Abandon a principle; transfer one's allegiance.

**plenitude**

Comparative fullness; plentifulness, abundance.

**retard**

Hold back; hinder; delay; check.

**galvanize**

Spur; rouse; stimulate; stir up.

**prune**

Clip; trim; snip; cut back.

**lukewarm**

Tepid; warm.

**imperil**

Endanger; put at risk; expose; hazard.

**repress**

Suppress; contain; hold back; stifle.

**execrated** Invoke evil upon; express loathing for; abhor. Pronounce a curse (upon); declare accursed. Make no longer holy; dedicate to evil.

through one of the severest ordeals and far-reaching revolutions that its history has recorded, had shrunk from one of the most powerful empires to a tiny Asiatic republic, its **Sultanate obliterated**, its dynasty overthrown, its **Caliphate**, the mightiest institution of Islám, abolished.

**90** Meanwhile the Faith that had been the object of such monstrous betrayals, and the target for such woeful assaults, was going from strength to strength, was forging ahead, undaunted and undivided by the injuries it had received. In the midst of trials it had inspired its loyal followers with a resolution that no obstacle, however **formidable**, could undermine. It had lighted in their hearts a faith that no **misfortune**, however black, could quench. It had infused into their hearts a hope that no force, however determined, could shatter.

### A World Religion

**91** Ceasing to designate to itself a movement, a fellowship and the like—designations that did grave injustice to its ever-unfolding system—dissociating itself from such appellations as Bábí sect, Asiatic cult, and offshoot of Shí'ih Islám, with which the ignorant and the **malicious** were wont to describe it, refusing to be labeled as a mere philosophy of life, or as an **eclectic** code of ethical conduct, or even as a new religion, the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh is now visibly succeeding in demonstrating its claim and title to be regarded as a World Religion, destined to attain, in the fullness of time, the status of a world embracing Commonwealth, which would be at once the instrument and

**obliterated**

Blotted out, leaving no clear trace; cause to disappear from view; completely conceal; erase, efface.

**formidable**

Difficult; terrible; daunting; arduous.

**misfortune**

Hardship; disaster; trial; tribulation.

**malicious**

Hateful; spiteful; mean; cruel.

**eclectic**

Assorted; diverse; free; miscellaneous.

the guardian of the Most Great Peace announced by its Author. Far from wishing to add to the number of the religious systems, whose conflicting loyalties have for so many generations disturbed the peace of mankind, this Faith is instilling into each of its adherents a new love for, and a genuine appreciation of the unity underlying, the various religions represented within its pale

**92** “It is like a wide embrace,” such is the **testimony of Royalty** to its claim and position, “gathering together all those who have long searched for words of hope. It accepts all great Prophets gone before it, destroys no other creeds, and leaves all doors open.” “The Bahá’í teaching,” she has further written, “brings peace to the soul and hope to the heart. To those in search of assurance the words of the Father are as a fountain in the desert after long wandering.” “Their writings,” she, in another statement referring to Bahá’u’lláh and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, has testified, “are a great cry toward peace, reaching beyond all limits of frontiers, above all dissension about **rites** and dogmas... It is a wondrous message that Bahá’u’lláh and His son ‘Abdu’l-Bahá have given us. They have not set it up aggressively knowing that the germ of eternal truth which lies at its core cannot but take root and spread.” “If ever the name of Bahá’u’lláh or ‘Abdu’l-Bahá,” is her concluding plea, “comes to your attention, do not put their writings from you. Search out their Books, and let their glorious, peace-bringing, love-creating words and lessons sink into your hearts as they have into mine.

**93** The Faith of Bahá’u’lláh has assimilated, by virtue of its creative, its

**rites**

A formal procedure or act in a religious or other solemn observance.

regulative and ennobling energies, the varied races, nationalities, **creeds** and classes that have sought its shadow, and have pledged **unswerving** fealty to its cause. It has changed the hearts of its adherents, burned away their prejudices, stilled their passions, exalted their conceptions, ennobled their motives, coordinated their efforts, and transformed their outlook. While preserving their patriotism and safeguarding their lesser loyalties, it has made them lovers of mankind, and the determined upholders of its best and truest interests. While maintaining **intact** their belief in the Divine origin of their respective religions, it has enabled them to visualize the underlying purpose of these religions, to discover their merits, to recognize their **sequence**, their **interdependence**, their wholeness and unity, and to acknowledge the bond that vitally links them to itself. This universal, this transcending love which the followers of the Bahá'í Faith feel for their fellow-men, of whatever race, creed, class or nation, is neither mysterious nor can it be said to have been artificially stimulated. It is both spontaneous and genuine. They whose hearts are warmed by the energizing influence of God's creative love **cherish** His creatures for His sake, and recognize in every human face a sign of His reflected glory.

**94** Of such men and women it may be truly said that to them "every foreign land is a fatherland, and every fatherland a foreign land." For their citizenship, it must be remembered, is in the Kingdom of Bahá'u'lláh. Though willing to share to the utmost the temporal benefits and the fleeting joys which this earthly life can confer, though eager to participate in whatever activity that

**creed**

Faith; doctrine; belief; statement of faith.

**unswerving**

Solid; reliable; trusty; constant.

**intact**

Whole; unbroken; together; undamaged.

**sequence**

Series; succession; run; progression.

**interdependence**

Depending on the other; mutually dependent.

**cherish**

Treat or regard (a person) affectionately; make much of; fondle.



conduces to the richness, the happiness and peace of that life, they can, at no time, forget that it constitutes no more than a **transient**, a very brief stage of their existence, that they who live it are but pilgrims and wayfarers whose goal is the **Celestial** City, and whose home the Country of never-failing joy and brightness.

**95** Though loyal to their respective governments, though profoundly interested in anything that affects their security and welfare, though anxious to share in whatever promotes their best interests, the Faith with which the followers of Bahá'u'lláh stand identified is one which they firmly believe God has raised high above the storms, the divisions, and controversies of the political arena. Their Faith they **conceive** to be essentially **non-political**, supra-national in character, rigidly **non-partisan**, and entirely dissociated from nationalistic ambitions, pursuits, and purposes. Such a Faith knows no division of class or of party. It subordinates, without **hesitation** or equivocation, every particularistic interest, be it personal, regional, or national, to the paramount interests of humanity, firmly convinced that in a world of inter-dependent peoples and nations the advantage of the part is best to be reached by the advantage of the whole, and that no abiding benefit can be conferred upon the component parts if the general interests of the entity itself are ignored or neglected.

**96** Small wonder if by the Pen of Bahá'u'lláh these pregnant words, written in anticipation of the present state of mankind, should have been revealed: "*It is not for him*

**transient**

Fleeting; brief; passing; temporary.

**celestial**

Related to the sky or heavens; outer space.

**conceive**

Consider; regard; think of; perceive.

**non-political**

Not a supporter or a party or organization With political aims or objectives.

**non-partisan**

Not associated with any political party, or political figure.

**hesitation**

Uncertainty; indecision; pause; delay.

*to pride himself who loveth his own country, but rather for him who loveth the whole world. The earth is but one country, and mankind its citizens.” And again, “That one indeed is a man who today dedicateth himself to the service of the entire human race.” “Through the power released by these exalted words,” He explains, “He hath lent a fresh impulse, and set a new direction, to the birds of men’s hearts, and hath obliterated every trace of restriction and limitation from God’s Holy Book.”*

**97** Their Faith, Bahá’ís firmly believe, is moreover undenominational, **non-sectarian**, and wholly divorced from every ecclesiastical system, whatever its form, origin, or activities. No ecclesiastical organization, with its creeds, its traditions, its limitations, and exclusive outlook, can be said (as is the case with all existing political factions, parties, systems and programs) to conform, in all its aspects, to the cardinal tenets of Bahá’í belief. To some of the principles and ideals animating political and ecclesiastical institutions every **conscientious** follower of the Faith of Bahá’u’lláh can, no doubt, readily subscribe. With none of these institutions, however, can he identify himself, nor can he unreservedly endorse the creeds, the principles and programs on which they are based.

**98** How can a Faith, it should moreover be borne in mind, whose divinely-ordained institutions have been established within the jurisdiction of no less than forty different countries, the policies and interests of whose governments are continually clashing and growing more complex and confused every day—how can such a Faith, by allowing its

**non-sectarian**

Not associated with a sect or splinter group.

**conscientious**

Careful; thorough; meticulous; reliable.

adherents, whether individually or through its organized councils, to **meddle** in political activities, succeed in preserving the integrity of its teachings and in safeguarding the unity of its followers? How can it insure the vigorous, the uninterrupted and peaceful development of its expanding institutions? How can a Faith, whose **ramifications** have brought it into contact with **mutually incompatible** religious systems, sects and confessions, be in a position, if it permits its adherents to subscribe to obsolescent observances and doctrines, to claim the unconditional **allegiance** of those whom it is striving to incorporate into its divinely-appointed system? How can it avoid the constant **friction**, the misunderstandings and controversies which formal **affiliation**, as distinct from association, must inevitably engender.

**99** These directing and regulating principles of Bahá'í belief the upholders of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh feel bound, as their Administrative Order expands and consolidates itself, to assert and **vigilantly** apply. The **exigencies** of a slowly crystallizing Faith impose upon them a duty which they cannot **shirk**, a responsibility they cannot **evade**.

**100** Nor are they unmindful of the imperative necessity of upholding and of executing the laws, as distinguished from the principles, ordained by Bahá'u'lláh, both of which constitute the warp and **woof** of the institutions upon which the structure of His World Order must ultimately rest. To demonstrate their usefulness and efficacy, to carry out and apply them, to safeguard their

**meddle**

Interfere; butt in; intrude; intervene.

**ramifications**

Consequence; result; effect; outcome.

**mutually**

Equally; jointly; reciprocally.

**incompatible**

Mismatched; unsuited; ill-assorted.

**allegiance**

Loyalty; duty; faithfulness to.

**friction**

Hostility; conflict; tension; strife.

**affiliation**

Plead in favour of, defend; recommend publicly.

**vigilantly**

Watchfully; carefully; warily; avidly.

**exigencies**

Demand; need; emergency; pressure; constraint.

**shirk**

Avoid; evade; dodge; duck.

**evade**

Avoid; dodge; escape; elude; skirt.

**woof**

Arrange (threads) so as to form a woof; weave.

integrity, to grasp their implications, and to facilitate their **propagation** Bahá'í communities in the East, and recently in the West, are displaying the utmost effort and are willing, if necessary, to make whatever sacrifices may be demanded. The day may not be far distant when in certain countries of the East, in which religious communities exercise jurisdiction in matters of personal status, Bahá'í Assemblies 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.

**101** The Faith of Bahá'u'lláh has, in addition to these tendencies and activities which its evolution is now revealing, demonstrated, in other spheres, and wherever the illumination of its light has penetrated, the force of its cohesive strength, of its integrating power, of its **invincible** spirit. In the erection and consecration of its House of Worship in the heart of the North American continent; in the construction and multiplication of its administrative headquarters in the land of its birth and in neighboring countries; in the fashioning of the legal instruments designed to safeguard and regulate the corporate life of its institutions; in the accumulation of adequate resources, material as well as cultural, in every continent of the globe; in the endowments which it has created for itself in the immediate surroundings of its Shrines at

**propagation**

Spread; broadcast; circulation; transmission.

**devolving**

Delegate; transfer; delegate; entrust; give to.

**inheritance**

Legacy; bequest; birthright; heritage.

**invincible**

Unbeatable; unshakable; indestructible.

its world center; in the efforts that are being made for the collection, the **verification**, and the systematization of the writings of its Founders; in the measures that are being taken for the **acquisition** of such historical sites as are associated with the lives of its Forerunner and its Author, its heroes and martyrs; in the foundations that are being laid for the gradual formation and establishment of its educational, its **cultural** and humanitarian institutions; in the vigorous efforts that are being exerted to safeguard the character, **stimulate** the initiative and coordinate the world-wide activities of its youth; in the extraordinary vitality with which its **valiant** defenders, its elected representatives, its **itinerant** teachers and pioneer administrators are pleading its cause, extending its boundaries, enriching its literature, and strengthening the basis of its spiritual conquests and triumphs; in the recognition which civil authorities have, in certain instances, been **induced** to grant to the body of its local and national representatives, enabling them to incorporate their councils, establish their **subsidiary** institutions, and safeguard their endowments; in the facilities which these same authorities have consented to accord to its shrines, its consecrated edifices, and educational institutions; in the enthusiasm and determination with which certain communities that had been severely tested and harassed are resuming their activities; in the spontaneous tributes paid by royalty, princes, statesmen and scholars to the sublimity of its cause and the station of its Founders—in these, as in many others, the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh is proving beyond doubt its **virility** and capacity to **counteract** the disintegrating influences to which religious

**verification**

Proof; corroboration; certification.

**acquisition**

Gaining; attainment; purchase; achievement.

**cultural**

Artistic; enlightening; enriching; civilizing.

**stimulate**

Rouse; kindle; excite; incite.

**valiant**

Brave; heroic; fearless; noble.

**itinerant**

Traveling; roving; wandering; roaming.

**induced**

Persuaded; encouraged; tempted.

**subsidiary**

Supplementary; additional; secondary.

**virility**

Strength and vigour of action or thought; energy or force of a virile character.

**counteract**

Offset; frustrate; thwart; counter.

systems, moral standards, and political and social institutions are being subjected.

**102** From Iceland to Tasmania, from Vancouver to the China Sea spreads the radiance and extend the ramifications of this world enfolding System, this many-hued and firmly-knit **Fraternity**, infusing into every man and woman it has won to its cause a faith, a hope, and a vigor that a wayward generation has long lost, and is powerless to recover. They who preside over the immediate destinies of this troubled world, they who are responsible for its chaotic state, its fears, its doubts, its miseries will do well, in their bewilderment, to fix their gaze and **ponder** in their hearts upon the evidences of this saving grace of the Almighty that lies within their reach—a grace that can ease their burden, resolve their **perplexities**, and illuminate their path.

### **Divine Retribution**

**103** The whole of mankind is groaning, is dying to be led to unity, and to terminate its age-long martyrdom. And yet it **stubbornly** refuses to embrace the light and acknowledge the sovereign authority of the one Power that can extricate it from its entanglements, and avert the woeful calamity that threatens to engulf it.

**104** Ominous indeed is the voice of Bahá'u'lláh that rings through these prophetic words: *“O ye peoples of the world! Know, verily, that an unforeseen calamity followeth you, and grievous retribution awaiteth you. Think not that which ye have committed hath been effaced in My sight.”* And again: *“We have a fixed time for you, O peoples. If ye fail, at the appointed hour, to turn towards*

**fraternity**

Union; alliance; company; group.

**ponder**

Think over; muse; brood over.

**perplexities**

Inability to deal with or understand things owing to their intricate nature; confusion, bewilderment; instances of this.

**stubbornly** Inflexibly; persistently; intractably.

*God, He, verily, will lay violent hold on you, and will cause grievous afflictions to assail you from every direction. How severe, indeed, is the chastisement with which your Lord will then **chastise** you!”*

**105** Must humanity, tormented as she now is, be afflicted with still severer tribulations ere their purifying influence can prepare her to enter the heavenly Kingdom destined to be established upon earth? Must the **inauguration** of so vast, so unique, so illumined an era in human history be ushered in by so great a **catastrophe** in human affairs as to recall, nay surpass, the appalling **collapse of Roman civilization** in the first centuries of the Christian Era? Must a series of **profound** convulsions stir and rock the human race ere Bahá'u'lláh can be enthroned in the hearts and consciences of the masses, ere His undisputed **ascendancy** is universally recognized, and the noble **edifice** of His World Order is reared and established?

**106** The long ages of infancy and childhood, through which the human race had to pass, have receded into the background. Humanity is now experiencing the commotions invariably associated with the most turbulent stage of its evolution, the stage of adolescence, when the **impetuosity** of youth and its **vehemence** reach their climax, and must gradually be superseded by the calmness, the wisdom, and the maturity that characterize the stage of manhood. Then will the human race reach that **stature** of ripeness which will enable it to acquire all the powers and capacities upon which its ultimate development must depend.

**chastise**

Reprimand; tell off; discipline; punish.

**inauguration**

The formal or definite beginning of or introduction to a course of action; to formally begin.

**catastrophe**

Disaster; calamity; ruin; misfortune.

**profound**

Intense; acute; great; overpowering; overwhelming.

**ascendancy**

Superiority; dominance; upper hand; control.

**edifice**

Structure; construction; house; shop.

**impetuosity**

Rashness; hastiness; suddenness.

**vehemence**

Fervor; forcefulness; passion; vigor.

**stature**

Standing; status; rank; reputation.

## World Unity the Goal

**107** Unification of the whole of mankind is the hall-mark of the stage which human society is now approaching. Unity of family, of tribe, of city-state, and nation have been successively attempted and fully established. World unity is the goal towards which a harassed humanity is striving. Nation-building has come to an end. The anarchy inherent in state sovereignty is moving towards a climax. A world, growing to maturity, must abandon this **fetish**, recognize the oneness and wholeness of human relationships, and establish once for all the machinery that can best incarnate this fundamental principle of its life.

**fetish**

Obsession; fixation; mania; craze.

**108** “A new life,” Bahá’u’lláh proclaims, “is, in this age, stirring within all the peoples of the earth; and yet none hath discovered its cause, or perceived its **motive**.” “O ye children of men,” He thus addresses His generation, “the fundamental purpose animating the Faith of God and His Religion is to safeguard the interests and promote the unity of the human race... This is the straight path, the fixed and immovable foundation. Whatsoever is raised on this foundation, the changes and chances of the world can never impair its strength, nor will the revolution of countless centuries undermine its structure.” “The well-being of mankind,” He declares, “its peace and security are unattainable unless and until its unity is firmly established.” “So powerful is the light of unity,” is His further testimony, “that it can illuminate the whole earth. The one true God, He Who knoweth all things, Himself testifieth

**motive**

Reason; cause; object; purpose.



*to the truth of these words... This goal excelleth every other goal, and this aspiration is the monarch of all aspirations.” “He Who is your Lord, the All-Merciful,” He, moreover, has written, “cherisheth in His heart the desire of beholding the entire human race as one soul and one body. Haste ye to win your share of God’s good grace and mercy in this Day that eclipseth all other created days.”*

**109** 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 the personal freedom and initiative of the individuals that 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 hindrances and restrictions, and functioning with marvellous

**aspiration**

Goal; objective; aim; target.

**adjudicate**

Arbitrate; referee; umpire; judge.

**compulsory**

Required; obligatory; necessary; enforced.

**mechanism**

The mode of operation or a process.

swiftness and perfect regularity. A world metropolis will act as the nerve center 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 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 cooperate, 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 coordinated and developed, and the distribution of its products will be equitably regulated.

**110** National rivalries, hatreds, and intrigues will cease, and racial animosity and prejudice will be replaced by racial amity, understanding and cooperation. 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

metropolis

City; capital; metropolitan area.

currency

Money; legal tender; exchange; cash.

intercourse

Contact; communication; association.

manipulated

Influenced; controlled; directed by.

vested

Secured or settled in the possession of or assigned to a person.

liberated

Unconventional; open-minded; freethinking.

utilized

Made use of; exploited; employed.

inordinate

Excessive; undue; immoderate.

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 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.

**111** 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.

**112** *“One of the great events,”* affirms ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *‘which is to occur in the Day of the manifestation of that **incomparable** Branch is the **hoisting** of the Standard of God among all nations. By this is meant that all nations and kindreds will be gathered together under the shadow of this Divine*

**dissipated**

Dissolute; degenerate; self-indulgent; rakish.

**extermination**

Extinction; execution; killing; annihilation.

**prolongation**

Continuation; persistence; maintenance.

**federal**

Central; national; centralized.

**impelled**

Driven; pressed; prompted; provoked.

**incomparable**

Without equal; unmatched; unique; unrivaled.

**hoisting**

Lift; raise; pull; heave; erect.

*Banner, which is no other than the Lordly Branch itself, and 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.” “Now, in the world of being,” He has moreover explained, “the Hand of Divine power hath firmly laid the foundations of this all-highest bounty, and this wondrous gift. Whatsoever is latent in the innermost of this holy Cycle shall gradually appear and be made manifest, for now is but the beginning of its growth, and the dayspring of the revelation of its signs. Ere the close of this century and of this age, it shall be made clear and evident how wondrous was that spring-tide, and how heavenly was that gift.”*

**113** No less **enthralling** is the vision of **Isaiah**, the greatest of the Hebrew Prophets, predicting, as far back as twenty five hundred years ago, the destiny which mankind must, at its stage of maturity, achieve: *“And He (the Lord) shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more... And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots... And he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb,*

**antagonism**

Rivalry; opposition; aggression; hostility.

**adhere**

Stick; hold; stay; remain; hold fast.

**enthralling**

Beguiling; absorbing; gripping; fascinating.

**Isaiah**

A highly respected Old Testament Prophet.

**rebuke** Reproach; reproof; censure; lecture.

**plowshares**

Plow blades to break soil.

**pruninghooks**

Devices for trimming branches.

**girdle**

Strap; belt; restraint.

**loins**

Side; haunch; tenderloin.

and the *leopard* shall lie down with the *kid*; and the calf and the young lion and the *fatling* together... And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the *asp*, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the *cockatrice*'s den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.”

**114** The writer of the *Apocalypse*, prefiguring the *millennial* glory which a redeemed, a *jubilant* humanity must witness, has similarly testified: “*And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I, John, saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, ‘Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.’”*”

**115** Who can doubt that such a consummation—the coming of age of the human race—must signalize, in its turn, the inauguration of a world civilization such as no mortal eye hath ever beheld or human mind conceived? Who is it that can imagine the lofty standard which such a civilization, as it unfolds itself, is destined to attain? Who can measure the heights to which human intelligence, liberated from its *shackles*, will soar? Who can visualize the realms which the

*leopard*

A large carnivorous mammal of the cat family.

*kid*

A young goat.

*fatling*

A calf, lamb, or other young animal fattened for slaughter.

*asp* A poisonous snake; Egyptian cobra.

*cockatrice*

A fabulous reptile, whose gaze or breath is fatal, hatched by a serpent from a cock's egg.

*Apocalypse*

Any vision or prophecy, especially of violent or climactic events comparable with those foretold in the Bible chapter of the Revelation of St John.

*millennial*

One thousand years.

*jubilant*

Triumphant; proud; thrilled; ecstatic.

*shackles*

Fetters; manacles; chains; irons.

human spirit, vitalized by the outpouring light of Bahá'u'lláh, shining in the plenitude of its glory, will discover?

**116** What more fitting conclusion to this theme than these words of Bahá'u'lláh, written in anticipation of the golden age of His Faith—the age in which the face of the earth, from pole to pole, will mirror the ineffable splendors of the Abhá Paradise?

*“This is the Day whereon naught can be seen except the splendors of the Light that shineth from the face of thy Lord, the Gracious, the Most Bountiful. Verily, We have caused every soul to expire by virtue of Our irresistible and all-subduing sovereignty. We have then called into being a new creation, as a token of Our grace unto men. I am, verily, the All-Bountiful, the Ancient of Days. This is the Day whereon the unseen world crieth out: ‘Great is thy blessedness, O earth, for thou hast been made the foot-stool of thy God, and been chosen as the seat of His mighty throne!’ The realm of glory exclaimeth: ‘Would that my life could be sacrificed for thee, for He Who is the Beloved of the All-Merciful hath established His sovereignty upon thee, through the power of His name that hath been promised unto all things, whether of the past or of the future.’”*

SHOGHI

Haifa, Palestine,  
March 11, 1936

ineffable

Indescribable; beyond words; inexpressible; indefinable.

expire

Die; perish; pass away; breathe your last.

token

Sign; symbol; gesture; proof.

## BAHÁ'Í ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER

GIVEN NAME	LEADERSHIP	PERIOD OF ADMINISTRATIVE LEADERSHIP
SIYYID 'ALÍ MUHAMMAD SHÍRÁZÍ (1819-1850)	THE BÁB	1844-1853
MÍRZÁ HUSAYN 'ALÍ NURÍ (1817-1892)	BAHÁ'U'LLÁH	1853-1892
ABBAS EFFENDI (1844-1921)	'ABDU'L-BAHÁ	1892-1921
SHOGHI EFFENDI RABBANI (1897-1957)	GUARDIAN OF THE FAITH	1921-1957)
THE HANDS OF THE CAUSE OF GOD	HANDS (INTERREGNUM)	1957-1963
	THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE	1963-PRESENT

For the first time in religious history the Manifestation of God (Bahá'u'lláh) has brought a “Divine Polity which incarnates God's immutable Purpose for all men.” —*WOB*, 65.

The great Old Testament prophet—Isaiah—prefigured the coming of Bahá'u'lláh in one of the most famous prophecies of the Bible: *For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.* —*Is.* 9:6

—Ed.

Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation included the institutions of the Local Houses of Justice and The Universal House of Justice. 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Will and Testament made provision for National Spiritual Assemblies. *“And now, concerning the House of Justice ... it must be elected by universal suffrage, that is, by the believers. Its members must be manifestations of the fear of God and daysprings of knowledge and understanding, must be steadfast in God's faith and the well-wishers of all mankind. By this House is meant the Universal House of Justice, that is, in all countries a secondary House of Justice must be instituted, and these secondary Houses of Justice must elect the members of the Universal one.”* Underline emphasis added.

—*Will & Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, 14.

49. The Lord hath ordained that in every city a House of Justice be established # 30

The institution of the House of Justice consists of elected councils which operate at the local, national and international levels of society. Bahá'u'lláh ordains both the Universal House of Justice and the Local Houses of Justice in the *Kitab-i-Aqdas*. 'Abdu'l-Bahá, in His Will and Testament, provides for the Secondary (National or Regional) Houses of Justice and outlines the method to be pursued for the election of the Universal House of Justice.

In the verse cited above, the reference is to the Local House of Justice, an institution which is to be elected in a locality whenever there are nine or more resident adult Bahá'ís. For this purpose, the definition of adult was temporarily fixed at the age of 21 years by the Guardian, who indicated it was open to change by the Universal House of Justice in the future.

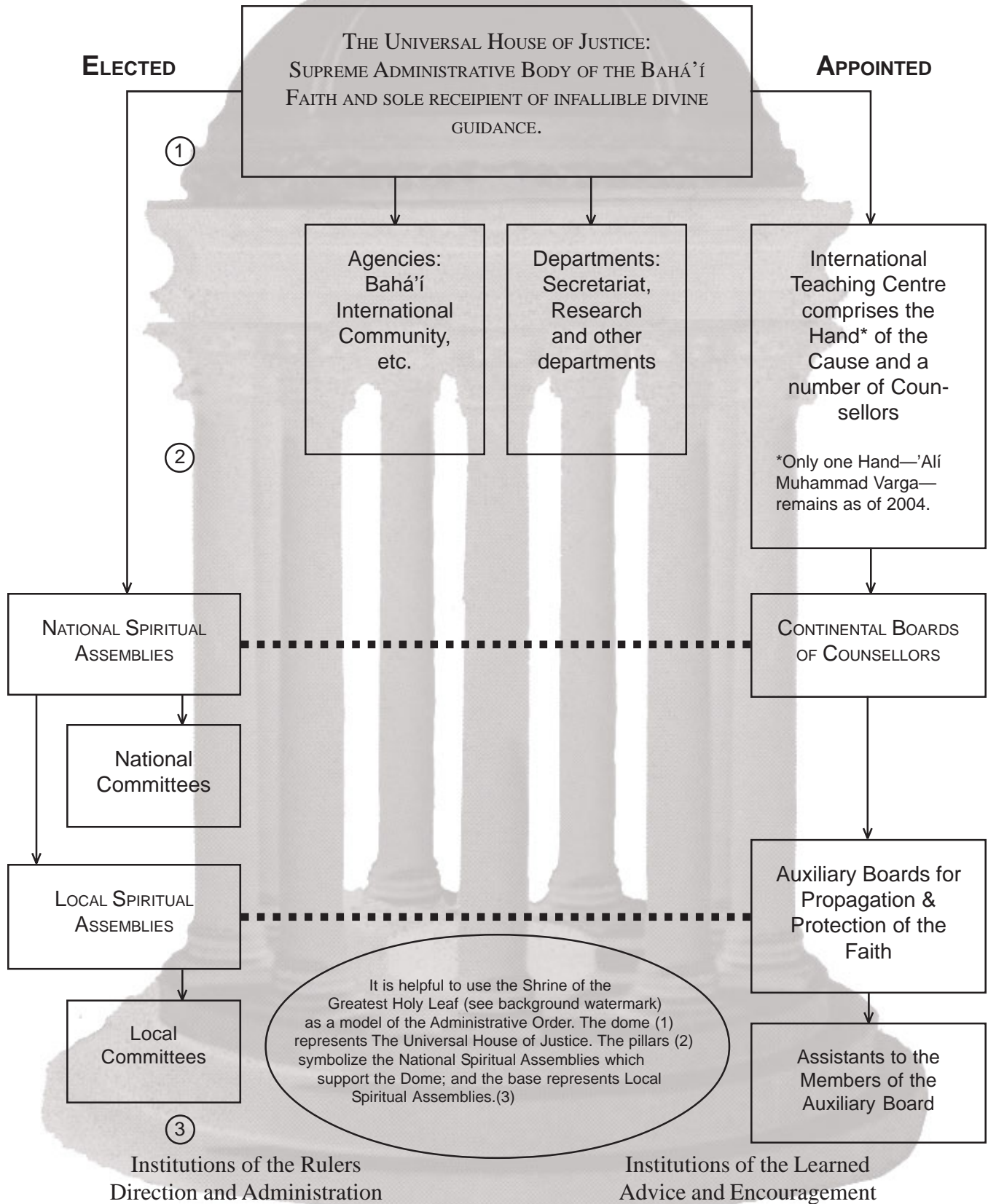
Local and Secondary Houses of Justice are, for the present, known as Local Spiritual Assemblies and National Spiritual Assemblies. Shoghi Effendi has indicated that this is a “temporary appellation” which,

“...as the position and aims of the Bahá'í Faith are better understood and more fully recognized, will gradually be superseded by the permanent and more appropriate designation of House of Justice. Not only will the present-day Spiritual Assemblies be styled differently in future, but they will be enabled also to add to their present functions those powers, duties, and prerogatives necessitated by the recognition of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, not merely as one of the recognized religious systems of the world, but as the State Religion of an independent and Sovereign Power.”

—*The Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, 188-189, Note 49 on paragraph 30.

A CHART OF THE THE PRESENT-DAY BAHÁ'Í ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER IS GIVEN ON THE NEXT PAGE.

# PRESENT STRUCTURE OF BAHÁ'Í ADMINISTRATION

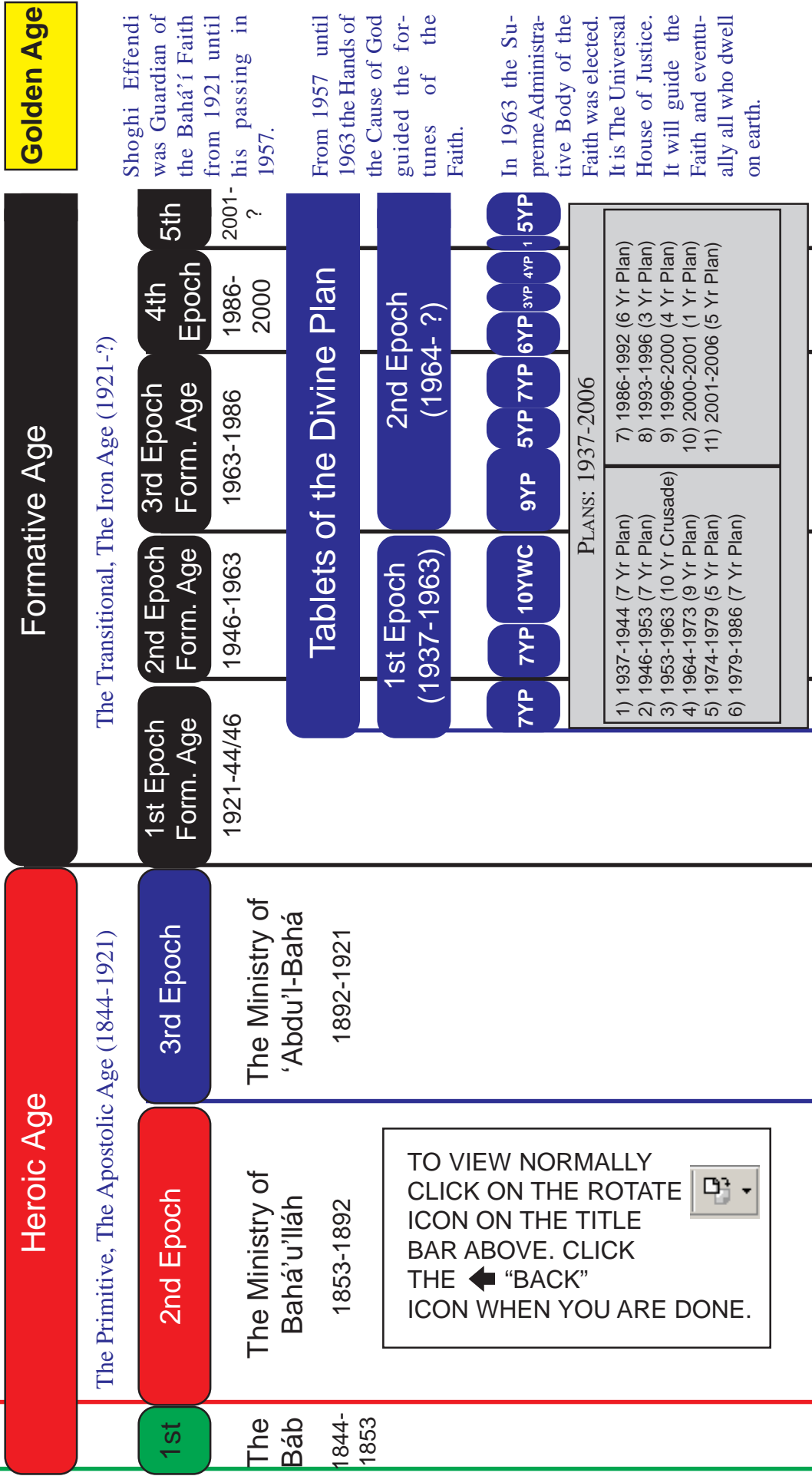




**BAHÁ'Í CYCLE - DESTINED TO LAST FOR 500,000 YEARS (5,000 CENTURIES)**

**Bahá'í Era (comprising the Dispensations of the Báb & Bahá'u'lláh)**

**Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh (destined to last at least 1,000 years)**



## “new World Order”

The existing (2004) order of the world is primarily a materialistic one dominated economically, politically and militarily by a few nations. The new world order of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation will be one spiritually based and patterned after the Bahá'í Administrative Order.

—Ed.

“To a lesser degree this principle must of necessity apply to the country which has vindicated its right to be regarded as the cradle of the World Order of Baha'u'llah. So great a function, so noble a role, can be regarded as no less inferior to the part played by those immortal souls who, through their sublime renunciation and unparalleled deeds, have been responsible for the birth of the Faith itself. Let not, therefore, those who are to participate so predominantly in the birth of that world civilization, which is the direct offspring of their Faith, imagine for a moment that for some mysterious purpose or by any reason of inherent excellence or special merit Bahá'u'lláh has chosen to confer upon their country and people so great and lasting a distinction. It is precisely by reason of the patent evils which notwithstanding its other admittedly great characteristics and achievements, an excessive and binding materialism has unfortunately engendered within it that the Author of their Faith and the Center of His Covenant have singled it out to become the standard-bearer of the New World Order envisioned in their writings. It is by such means as this that Bahá'u'lláh can best demonstrate to a heedless generation His almighty power to raise up from the very midst of a people immersed in a sea of materialism, a prey to one of the most virulent and long-standing forms of racial prejudice, and notorious for its political corruption, lawlessness and laxity in moral standards, men and women who, as time goes by, will increasingly exemplify those essential virtues of self-renunciation, of moral rectitude, of chastity, of indiscriminating fellowship, of holy discipline, and of spiritual insight that will fit them for the prepon-

derating share they will have in calling into being that World Order and that World Civilization of which their country, no less than the entire human race, stands in desperate need. Theirs will be the duty and privilege, in their capacity first as the establishers of one of the most powerful pillars sustaining the edifice of the Universal House of Justice, and then as the champion-builders of that New World Order of which that House is to be the nucleus and forerunner, to inculcate, demonstrate, and apply those twin and sorely needed principles of Divine justice and order-principles to which the political corruption and the moral license, increasingly staining the society to which they belong, offer so sad and striking a contrast.”

—Shoghi Effendi, *Advent of Divine Justice*, 19-20.

### President Wilson's vision of a new world order.

In one of the most ambitious rhetorical efforts in modern history, President Wilson attempted to rally the people of the world in a movement for a peace settlement that would remove the causes of future wars and establish machinery to maintain peace. In an address to the Senate on Jan. 22, 1917, he called for a “peace without victory” to be enforced by a league of nations that the United States would join and strongly support. He reiterated this program in his war message, adding that the United States wanted above all else to “make the world safe for democracy.” And when he failed to persuade the British and French leaders to join him in issuing a common statement of war aims, he went to Congress on Jan. 8, 1918, to make, in his Fourteen Points address, his definitive avowal to the American people and the world. In his general points Wilson demanded an end to the old diplomacy that had led to wars in the past. He proposed open diplomacy instead of entangling alliances, and he called for freedom of the seas, an impartial

“New World Order” continued ... ➡

settlement of colonial claims, general disarmament, removal of artificial trade barriers, and, most important, a league of nations to promote peace and protect the territorial integrity and independence of its members. On specific issues he demanded, among other things, the restoration of a Belgium ravaged by the Germans; sympathetic treatment of the Russians, then involved in a civil war; establishment of an independent Poland; the return of Alsace-Lorraine to France; and autonomy or self-determination for the subject peoples of the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman empires. A breathtaking pronouncement, the Fourteen Points gave new hope to millions of liberals and moderate socialists who were fighting for *a new international order based upon peace and justice.*

Underline and italic emphasis added.

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## “Lesser Peace”

### ‘Lesser Peace Referred to in *Century of Light*’

Initially, it seemed that the vision of the future conceived by **Woodrow Wilson** would now be realized. In part, this proved to be the case as subject peoples throughout Europe gained the freedom to work out their own destinies through the emergence from the ruin of the former empires of a series of new nation-states. Further, the president’s “**Fourteen Points**” briefly endowed his public statements with so great a moral authority in the minds of millions of Europeans that not even the most recalcitrant of his fellow leaders among the Allied powers could entirely disregard his wishes. Despite months of wrangling over colonies, borders, and clauses in the text of the peace treaty, the **Versailles settlement** eventually incorporated an attenuated form of the proposed **League of Nations**, an institution which it was hoped could adjust future disputes between nations and harmonize international affairs.

Shoghi Effendi’s commentary on the significance of this historic initiative commands reflection on the part of every Bahá’í who seeks to understand the events of this turbulent century. Describing two closely interrelated developments that are associated with the dawn of world peace, he lays emphasis on the fact that they are “destined to culminate, in the fullness of time, in a single glorious consummation”. The first, the Guardian describes as associated with the mission of the Bahá’í community in the North American continent; the second, with the destiny of the United States as a nation. Speaking of this latter phenomenon, which dated back to the outbreak of the first world war, Shoghi Effendi writes: It received its initial impetus through the formulation of President Wilson’s Fourteen Points, closely associating for the first time that republic with the fortunes of the Old World. It suffered its first

setback through the dissociation of that republic from the newly born League of Nations which that president had labored to create.... It must, however long and tortuous the way, lead, through a series of victories and reverses, to the political unification of the Eastern and Western Hemispheres, to the emergence of a world government and the establishment of the Lesser Peace, as foretold by Bahá’u’lláh and foreshadowed by the Prophet Isaiah. It must, in the end, culminate in the unfurling of the banner of the Most Great Peace, in the Golden Age of the Dispensation of Bahá’u’lláh.

How tragic, therefore, was the fate of the conception that had inspired the efforts of the American president. As soon became apparent, the League had been stillborn. Although it included such features as a legislature, a judiciary, an executive, and a supporting bureaucracy, it had been denied the authority vital to the work it was ostensibly intended to perform. Locked into the nineteenth century’s conception of untrammelled national sovereignty, it could take decisions only with the unanimous assent of the member states, a requirement largely ruling out effective action.<sup>42</sup> The hollowness of the system was exposed, as well, by its failure to include some of the world’s most powerful states: Germany had been rejected as a defeated nation held responsible for the war, Russia was initially denied entrance because of its Bolshevik regime, and the United States itself refused—as a result of narrow political partisanship in Congress—either to join the League or to ratify the treaty. Ironically, even the half-hearted efforts made to protect ethnic minorities living in the newly created nation-states proved eventually to be little more than weapons to be used in Europe’s continuing fratricidal conflicts.

—Century of Light, 33-35

“The Lesser Peace” continued ... ➡

## The Lesser Peace

"This is the outline of the Lesser Peace in its second, its fuller stage.

(See Table SIX)

"As to the outline of the institutions and features of the Most Great Peace, that is something else altogether, and you find that in the words of Shoghi Effendi in *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, pages 203-204, in his letter, "The Unfoldment of World Civilization." ...

"Now, there are a few other hints found in our Writings about the achievements of the Lesser Peace in both stages, in addition to the features Shoghi Effendi has included in what he calls his broad outline. ...

1. The limits and boundaries of each and every nation will be clearly fixed.
2. The relations of governments towards one another will be definitely laid down.
3. The size of the armaments of each nation will be determined.
4. All international agreements and obligations will be checked and reviewed.
5. Steps will be taken to ensure that resources spent on the destruction of the human race will be used for universal development and prosperity.
6. Every nation on earth, whether its government is a constitutional monarchy or republican, will reign in honor, and its peoples will be cradled in tranquility and content.

## TABLE SIX

### The Lesser Peace

#### FORM AND OBJECTIVES AS IT EVOLVES

1. reconstruct and demilitarize the world
2. nations cede claims to make war
3. nations cede certain rights to impose taxes
4. nations cede all rights to maintain arms, except for internal order
5. international executive branch
6. world parliament
7. supreme tribunal
8. economic barriers removed
9. interdependence of capital and labour
10. religious fanaticism stilled
11. racial animosity extinguished
12. single code of international law
13. forces combined from federated units
14. militant nationalism transmuted into consciousness of world citizenship

—Shoghi Effendi, *World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, 44-43.

[This page quoted from *Prelude to The Lesser Peace* by Kathy Lee, 88-89.



## “the Most Great Peace”

“In his letters to the rulers and elsewhere Bahá’u’lláh appealed for world peace, referring both to a ‘Great Peace’ (*sulh-i-akbar*, translated by Shoghi Effendi as the ‘Lesser Peace’) and a ‘Most Great Peace’ (*sulh-i-a’zam*). Peace was the chief means for the protection of humanity (*ESW* 30). The Most Great Peace apparently represented the union of all the world’s peoples in one common faith. This was the ‘sovereign remedy’ for the healing of the world, for it was RELIGION that provided the best means for human welfare. This remedy could only be achieved through the power of ‘an all-powerful and inspired Physician’ (i.e. Bahá’u’lláh). However, as the world’s rulers had refused this Most Great Peace (by not accepting Bahá’u’lláh), they should instead strive to establish the ‘Lesser Peace’, a political peace between nations (Proclamation 12-13, 67-8). Conflicts between the nations were the cause of calamity. It was imperative to end them. This would also relieve the people of the world from ‘the burden of exorbitant expenditures’ (*TB* 89). An ‘all-embracing’ assembly attended by the world’s rulers must be held to establish the foundations of this peace, and the great powers must become reconciled amongst themselves. Thereafter, peace would be upheld by collective security: all other nations acting together in unison against any aggressor nation. This would obviate the need for ARMAMENTS, apart from the limited quantities required to maintain internal order in each country (*ESW* 30-1; *TB* 165). The ministers of the HOUSE OF JUSTICE Must also promote this peace (*TB* 89). Those who upheld peace would be greatly blessed (*TB* 23). Ultimately, however, the ‘overwhelming corruptions’ of the world would only be purged through uniting the peoples of the world in one universal faith and the pursuit of one common aim (*TB* 69).

‘Abdu’l-Bahá stated that true civilization would only be established in the world once a number of the world’s RULERS had come together ‘with firm resolve and clear vision’ to establish universal peace. They would have to establish a binding treaty which would delimit all international frontiers, define international relations and restrict the size of each nation’s military forces. Breach of this sacred

agreement would lead to international intervention against any aggressor nation. Under such circumstances each government would only need a small force in order to maintain internal order, and there would no longer be any need for large stockpiles of armaments or an international arms race. Human energies and resources could instead be devoted to fostering the development and well-being of the world’s peoples (*SDC* 647). He ‘emphasized that the work towards peace needed to be combined with the achievement of a wider reconstruction of society. Thus, the expansion of democratic forms of government, and in particular the education, enfranchisement and growing political power of WOMEN were of major importance in bringing about international peace (*PI* 108, 134-5, 167, 375). He also predicted that the excessive costs of military expenditure would ultimately force nations to seek peace; stressed that disarmament should be multilateral (*CC2*: 171, 172); and called on the United States and Canada to take the lead in establishing peace (*PUP* 36-7, 83-4, 318).

Shoghi Effendi reiterated these teachings, distinguishing between the Lesser Peace, to be established by the governments of the world, and the Most Great Peace, to be established by the expansion of the Faith, and characterized by the development of what he termed the ‘Bahá’í World Commonwealth’ (*see* WORLD ORDER). In 1985 the Universal House of Justice issued its ‘peace statement’, *The Promise of World Peace*, a forceful expression of the Bahá’í ‘peace programme’, addressed to the peoples of the world and widely distributed to world leaders. *CC2*: 151-200; *SBBR* 74-7; 140-3; Lee, *Circle of Peace*.”

—Peter Smith, *A Concise Encyclopedia of the Bahá’í Faith*, 266-267.



## Bahá'u'lláh's Tablet to Queen Victoria

**O** Queen in London! Incline thine ear unto the voice of thy Lord, the Lord of all mankind, calling from the Divine Lote-Tree: Verily, no God is there but Me, the Almighty, the All-Wise! Cast away all that is on earth, and attire the head of thy kingdom with the crown of the remembrance of thy Lord, the All-Glorious. He, in truth, hath come unto the world in His most great glory, and all that hath been mentioned in the Gospel hath been fulfilled. The land of Syria [Palestine/Israel] hath been honoured by the footsteps of its Lord, the Lord of all men, and North and South are both inebriated with the wine of His presence. Blessed is the man that inhaled the fragrance of the Most Merciful, and turned unto the Dawning-Place of His Beauty, in this resplendent Dawn. The Mosque of Aqsa vibrateth through the breezes of its Lord, the All-Glorious whilst Batha (Mecca) trembleth at the voice of God, the Exalted, the Most High. Whereupon every single stone of them celebrateth the praise of the Lord, through this Great Name.

Lay aside thy desire, and set then thine heart towards thy Lord, the Ancient of Days. We make mention of thee for the sake of God, and desire that thy name may be exalted through thy remembrance of God, the Creator of earth and heaven. He, verily, is witness unto that which I say. We have been informed that thou hast forbidden the trading in slaves, both men and women. This, verily, is what God hath enjoined in this wondrous Revelation. God hath, truly, destined a reward for thee, because of this. He, verily, will pay the doer of good his due recompense, wert thou to follow what hath been sent unto thee by Him Who is the All-Knowing, the All-Informed. As to him who turneth aside, and



Queen Victoria reigned 64 years (1837-1901), one of the longest reigns of any monarch, ever.

swelleth with pride, after that the clear tokens have come unto him, from the Revealer of signs, his work shall God bring to naught. He, in truth, hath power over all things. Man's actions are acceptable after his having recognized (the Manifestation). He that turneth aside from the True One is indeed the most veiled amongst His creatures. Thus hath it been decreed by Him Who is the Almighty, the Most Powerful.

We have also heard that thou hast entrusted the reins of counsel into the hands of the representatives of the people. Thou, indeed, hast done well, for thereby the foundations of the edifice of thine affairs will be strengthened, and the hearts of all that are beneath thy shadow, whether high or low, will be tranquillized. It behoveth them, however, to be trustworthy among His servants, and to regard themselves as the representatives of all that dwell on earth. This is what counselleth them, in this Tablet, He Who is

Queen Victoria continued ... ➡

the Ruler, the All-Wise... Blessed is he that entereth the assembly for the sake of God, and judgeth between men with pure justice. He, indeed, is of the blissful....

Turn thou unto God and say: O my Sovereign Lord! I am but a vassal of Thine, and Thou art, in truth, the King of Kings. I have lifted my suppliant hands unto the heaven of Thy grace and Thy bounties. Send down, then, upon me from the clouds of Thy generosity that which will rid me of all save Thee, and draw me nigh unto Thyself. I beseech Thee, O my Lord, by Thy name, which Thou hast made the king of names, and the manifestation of Thyself to all who are in heaven and on earth, to rend asunder the veils that have intervened between me and my recognition of the Dawning-Place of Thy signs and the Day Spring of Thy Revelation. Thou art, verily, the Almighty, the All-Powerful, the All-Bounteous. Deprive me not, O my Lord, of the fragrances of the Robe of Thy mercy in Thy days, and write down for me that which Thou hast written down for thy handmaidens who have believed in Thee and in Thy signs, and have recognized Thee, and set their hearts towards the horizon of Thy Cause. Thou art truly the Lord of the worlds and of those who show mercy the Most Merciful. Assist me, then, O my God, to remember Thee amongst Thy handmaidens, and to aid Thy Cause in Thy lands. Accept, then, that which hath escaped me when the light of Thy countenance shone forth. Thou, indeed, hast power over all things. Glory be to Thee, O Thou in Whose hand is the kingdom of the heavens and of the earth.

### **End of Bahá'u'lláh's Tablet to Queen Victoria**

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”Queen Victoria, it is said, upon reading the Tablet revealed for her remarked: ‘If this is of God, it will endure; if not, it can do no harm.’”

—Shoghi Effendi, *The Promised Day is Come*, 65.

**Victoria (queen)**, (1819-1901), queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland (1837-1901) and empress of India (1876-1901).

Born Alexandrina Victoria on May 24, 1819, in Kensington Palace, London, Victoria was the daughter of Victoria Mary Louisa, daughter of the duke of Saxe-Coburg-Saalfeld; her father was Edward Augustus, duke of Kent and Strathern, the fourth son of George III and youngest brother of George IV and William IV, kings of Great Britain. Because William IV had no legitimate children, his niece Victoria became heir apparent to the British crown upon his accession in 1830. On June 20, 1837, with the death of William IV, she became queen at the age of 18.

Early in her reign Victoria developed a serious concern with affairs of state, guided by her first prime minister, William Lamb, 2nd Viscount Melbourne. Melbourne was leader of that wing of the Whig Party that later became known as the Liberal Party. He exercised a strongly progressive influence on the political thinking of the queen.

### **Marriage**

In 1840 Victoria was married to her first cousin, Albert, prince of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, whom she had known for about four years. Although this was a marriage of state, it was a highly romantic and successful one, and Victoria was devoted to her domestic responsibilities. The

Queen Victoria continued ... ➡



first of their nine children was Victoria Adelaide Mary Louise, later empress of Germany. Their first son, Albert Edward, Prince of Wales and later king of Great Britain as Edward VII, was born in 1841. When the conservative Prince Albert convinced her that Liberal policy jeopardized the future of the Crown, the queen began to lose her enthusiasm for the party. After 1841, when the Melbourne government fell and Sir Robert Peel became prime minister, Victoria was an ardent supporter of the Conservative Party. Also under Albert's influence, she began to question the tradition that restricted the British sovereign to an advisory role. In 1850 she challenged the authority of Henry John Temple, 3rd Viscount Palmerston, foreign secretary in the Whig government that had been in power since 1846. Her position was that the sovereign should at least be consulted on foreign policy. Palmerston, independent and self-assertive, ignored the request. Their struggle reached a climax in 1851, when the prime minister, Lord John Russell, who was also displeased with Palmerston's arbitrary methods, dismissed him from the British Foreign Office. Their altercations with Palmerston, one of the most popular political leaders in the country, caused Victoria and Albert to lose some of the esteem of their subjects. Their popularity dwindled even more in 1854, when they tried to avert the Crimean War. After the war had begun, however, they gave it their wholehearted support. In 1856, shortly before the end of the war, the queen instituted the Victoria Cross, the highest British award for wartime valor.

In 1857, Victoria had the title of prince consort bestowed on Albert. Four years later he died, and she remained in virtual mourning for much of the rest of her life. She avoided public appearances, letting the Prince of Wales fulfill most of the royal ceremonial duties. Her detailed personal interest in the affairs of state continued, however.

### **Reign After 1861**

Several prime ministers served during the latter part of Victoria's reign, but only the Conservative Party leader Benjamin Disraeli, who held office in 1868 and from 1874 to 1880, gained her confidence. He ingratiated himself with the queen by his cultivated personal approach and his gift for flattery. He also allowed her a free hand in the awarding of church, military, and some political appointments. She fully endorsed his policy of strengthening and extending the British Empire, and in 1876 Disraeli secured for

her the title of empress of India. She rarely agreed with the brilliant leader of the Liberal Party, William E. Gladstone, who served as prime minister four times between 1868 and 1894. Victoria disapproved of the democratic reforms he enunciated, such as abolishing the purchase of military commissions and legalizing trade unions, and his powerful intellectualized method of argument. She was also strongly opposed to his policy of home rule for Ireland. The Conservative leader Robert Arthur Talbot Gascoyne-Cecil, 3rd Marquess of Salisbury, who served as prime minister three times between 1885 and 1902, more often found favor with the queen. Like Disraeli, he advocated protecting British interests and increasing British influence abroad.

### **British Idol**

Victoria's popularity among all classes in British society reached its height in the last two decades of her reign. Her golden jubilee in 1887 and her diamond jubilee in 1897 were occasions for great public rejoicing. Her subjects were then enjoying an unprecedented period of prosperous complacency, and her enthusiastic execution of the Boer War increased her appeal at home and abroad. Victoria died on January 22, 1901. Her 63-year reign was the longest in the history of England. Her descendants, including 40 grandchildren, married into almost every royal family of Europe.

With her personal example of honesty, patriotism, and devotion to family life, Victoria became a living symbol of the solidity of the British Empire. The many years of her reign, often referred to as the Victorian age, witnessed the rise of the middle class and were marked by a deeply conservative morality and intense nationalism.

Victoria's correspondence was published in three series, *Letters, 1837-61* (3 vol., 1907), *Letters, 1862-85* (3 vol., 1926-1928), and *Letters, 1886-1901* (3 vol., 1930-32).



## “progressive Revelations”

Bahá'í doctrine relating the various recognized world religions as ‘different stages in the eternal history and con-stant evolution of one religion’, itself divine and indivisible, and of which the Bahá'í revelation formed an integral part. Bahá'u'lláh's revelation occupied a unique role as it represented the culmination of those of the past (WOB 114 19, 166 7). No religion—including the Bahá'í Faith itself—could claim to be the final revelation of God to humanity (PDC 112). Revelation was both recurrent and progressive. Each MANIFESTATION OF GOD brought divine teachings appropriate to the spiritual capacity of the people of his day. As such, ‘religious truth’ is relative to its recipients and not absolute. The pro-phets proclaimed ‘eternal verities’ (moral and spiritual truths renewed by each Manifestation), but their message also changed to reflect the particular spiritual evolution of human society’ at their time of appearance (thus Bahá'u'lláh's message included both eternal moral truths and the call for world unity based on the proclamation of the oneness of humankind; and laws of marriage and criminal punishment varied from one religion to another) (Faith 2 3; PDC 112). The cycle of successive divine messengers is like the annual coming of the spring that brings new life to a cold, dead world which has come to neglect the teachings of the previous revelator (PUP 106, 115, 126-†. 151, 154, 273 4, 339, 361 70; SWAB 51 2). Over time, each religious system has declined as religionists blindly follow tradition rather than the pure teachings of the founder and base their belief on imitation rather than exercising INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATION OF TRUTH (PUP 221 2, 443). In the future God will continue to ‘send down’ his messengers to humanity until ‘the end that hath no end’, and they will unfold’ an ‘ever increasing’ measure of Divine guidance (WOB 116, 118). Bahá'u'lláh was insistent, however, that no further Manifestation would come for at least one thousand years after him K A 32 k37). (See also PROPHECY; RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY; SOCIAL EVOLUTION.)

—Peter Smith, *A Concise Encyclopedia of the Bahá'í Faith*, 276-277

Progressive Revelation Chart continued ... ➡

# PROGRESSIVE REVELATION



**BAHÁ'U'LLÁH**  
1817-1892



**BÁB**  
1819-1850



**MUHAMMAD**  
c.570-632



**CHRIST**  
0-33 CE



**BUDDHA**  
5TH-6TH CENT.  
BCE



**ZOROASTER**  
c.630-550  
BCE



**KRISHNA**  
c.630-550  
BCE



**MOSES**  
c.1300  
BCE

54. The number nine, which in itself is the number of perfection, is considered by the Baha'is as sacred because it is symbolic of the perfection of the Baha'i Revelation, which constitutes the ninth in the line of existing religions, the latest and fullest Revelation which mankind has ever known. The eighth is the Religion of the Bab, and the remaining seven are: Hinduism, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam and the religion of the Sabaeans. These religions are not the only true religions that have appeared in the world, but are the only ones which are still existing. There have always been divine prophets and messengers, to many of whom the Qur'an refers. But the only ones existing are those mentioned above. (28 July 1936) —Shoghi Effendi, *Compilation of Compilations*, Vol. I, 19-20.

## “Golden Age”

During this Formative Age of the Faith, and in the course of present and succeeding epochs, the last and crowning stage in the erection of the framework of the Administrative Order of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh—the election of the Universal House of Justice—will have been completed, the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, the Mother-Book of His Revelation, will have been codified and its laws promulgated, the Lesser peace will have been established, the unity of mankind will have been achieved and its maturity attained, the plan conceived by `Abdu'l-Bahá—will have been executed, the emancipation of the Faith from the fetters of religious orthodoxy will have been effected, and its independent religious status will have been universally recognized, whilst in the course of the Golden Age, destined to consummate the Dispensation itself, the banner of the Most Great Peace, promised by its Author, will have been unfurled, the World Baha'i Commonwealth will have emerged in the plenitude of its power and splendor, and the birth and efflorescence of a world civilization, the child of that Peace, will have conferred its inestimable blessings upon all mankind.

—Shoghi Effendi, *Citadel of Faith*, 6.

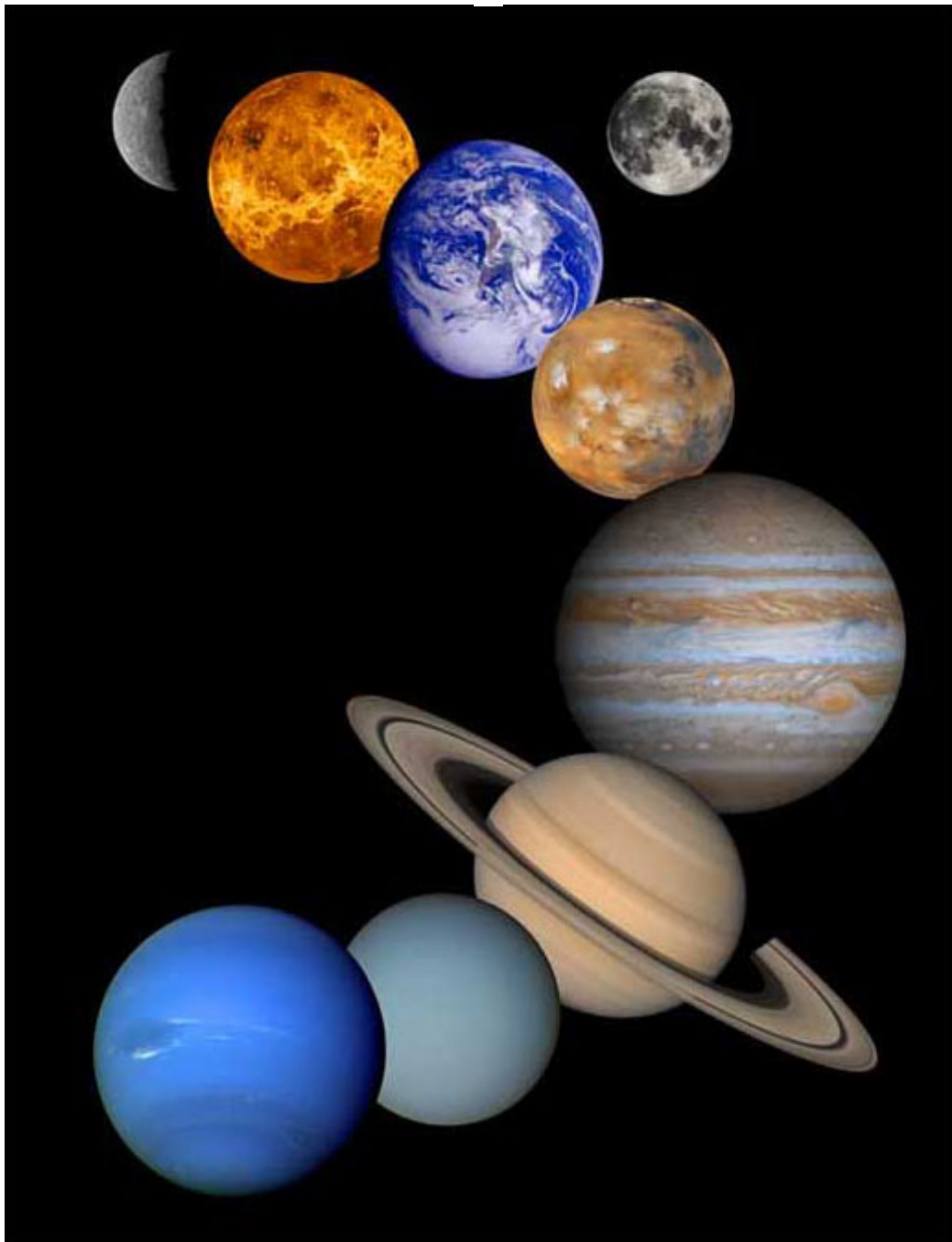


“furthermost limits in the organization of human society”

1594. Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh primarily for This Planet

"As to your question whether the power of Bahá'u'lláh extends over our solar system and to higher worlds: while the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, it should be noted, is primarily for this planet, yet the spirit animating it is all-embracing, and the scope therefore cannot be restricted or defined." (From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, July 14, 1938)

—Shoghi Effendi, *Lights of Guidance*, 481.



“the Ancient Beauty appeared, in the *year sixty*, in the person of ‘Ali-Muhammad, the Báb.”

### ‘The Year Sixty’

Bahá'u'lláh again affirms, "is none other except the Primal Point Who hath once again been made manifest." "He is," He thus refers to Himself in a Tablet addressed to one of the Letters of the Living, "the same as the One Who appeared in the year sixty (1260 A.H.). This verily is one of His mighty signs." "Who," He pleads in the Suriy-i-Damm, "will arise to secure the triumph of the Primal Beauty (the Báb) revealed in the countenance of His succeeding Manifestations?" Referring to the Revelation proclaimed by the Báb He conversely characterizes it as "My own previous Manifestation."

—Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, 139.

NOTE: The Muslim lunar calendar dates from Muhammad's emigration from the city of Mecca to the city of Medina. 1260 A.H. means 1,260 years Anno Hegirae (A.H.), after the hijra, which is the Arabic word for emigration. 1260 A.H. is the same year as 1844 C.E. Hence the Badí calendar begins in the year the Báb's Declaration: 1844.

—Ed.

“In the beginning of the seventh century after Christ, when Jerusalem was conquered, the Holy of Holies was outwardly preserved--that is to say, the house which Solomon built; but outside the Holy of Holies the outer court was taken and given to the Gentiles. "And the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months"—that is to say, the Gentiles shall govern and control Jerusalem forty and two months, signifying twelve hundred and sixty days; and as each day signifies a year, by this reckoning it becomes twelve hundred and sixty years, which is the duration of the cycle of the Qur'an. For in the texts of the Holy Book, each day is a year; as it is said in the fourth chapter of Ezekiel, verse 6: "Thou shalt bear the iniquity of the house of Judah forty days: I have appointed thee each day for a year." This prophesies the duration of the Dispensation of Islam when Jerusalem was trodden under foot, which means that it lost its glory—but the Holy of Holies was preserved, guarded and respected—until the year 1260. This twelve hundred and sixty years is a prophecy of the manifestation of the Báb, the "Gate" of Bahá'u'lláh, which took place in the year 1260 of the Hejira of Muhammad, and as the period of twelve hundred and sixty years has expired, Jerusalem, the Holy City, is now beginning to become prosperous, populous and flourishing.”

—'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Some Answered Questions*, 46.

1260 AH = 1844 CE  
1260 'DAYS' = 40 AND 2 MONTHS



## “American Republic”



Thirteen Original Colonies Before Unification

### The Political System

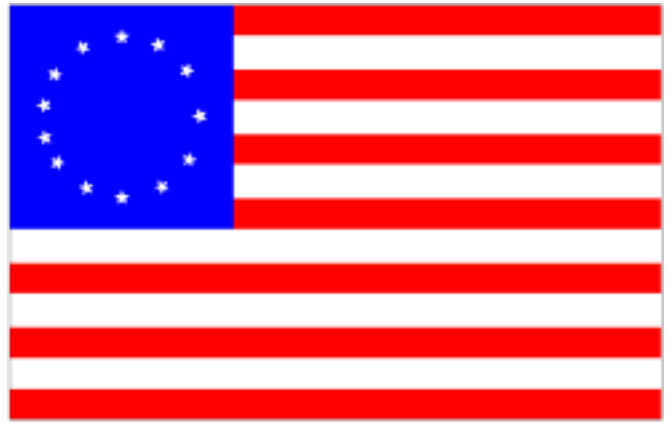
In 1750 there was little political basis for a national consciousness in the colonies of British North America. Each of the 13 colonies was a separate entity, with its own governor and legislative assembly. The inhabitants' first political allegiance was to their own colony. The lower house of each legislature was elected by the adult white men who were property owners. However, the upper houses, or councils, and the governors were chosen in different ways depending on the type of colony.

In 1750 there were no governmental bodies or political parties that could formulate policy for the colonists as a whole. Such intercolony ties were created only in response to political events that affected all the colonies—first the French and



THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

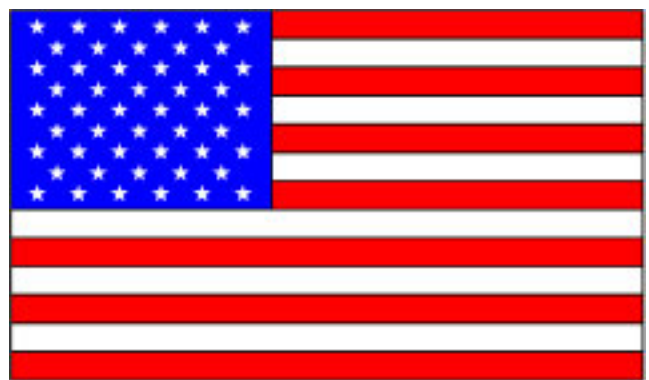
By the application of the principle of “Federalism” the separate states were able to unite under a Federal government (in 1787) that administrated the union of the states and represented the American nation to other nations. —Ed.



Indian War and then the struggle for independence.

Nevertheless, the colonies shared one important political institution. Each colony had a representative assembly with authority to make laws covering most aspects of local life. The assemblies had the right to tax; to appropriate money for public works and public officials; and to regulate internal trade, religion, and social behavior. Although the British government was responsible for external matters, such as foreign affairs and trade, the American colonists had a great deal of self-government during the colonial period. The capable leaders of the assemblies took the lead in the independence struggle. These well-functioning representative institutions would form the basis for the new state governments.

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“the emergence of a unified community of  
federated states”

## FEDERALISM

The world is contracting into a neighborhood. America, willingly or unwillingly, must face and grapple with this new situation. For purposes of national security, let alone any humanitarian motive, she must assume the obligations imposed by this newly created neighborhood. Paradoxical as it may seem, her only hope of extricating herself from the perils gathering around her is to become entangled in that very web of international association which the Hand of an inscrutable Providence is weaving.

‘Abdu’l-Baha’s counsel to a highly placed official in its government comes to mind, with peculiar appropriateness and force:

*You can best serve your country if you strive, in your capacity as a citizen of the world, to assist in the eventual application of the principle of federalism, underlying the government of your own country, to the*

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\* Woodrow Wilson (1856-1924), the 28th President of the United States (1913-1921).

*relationships now existing between the peoples and nations of the world. The ideals that fired the imagination of America’s tragically unappreciated President\**, whose high endeavors, however much nullified by a visionless generation, ‘Abdu’l-Baha, through His own pen, acclaimed as signaling the dawn of the Most Great Peace, though now lying in the dust, bitterly reproach a heedless generation for having so cruelly abandoned them.

—Shoghi Effendi, 1938, *Advent of Divine Justice*, 87-88.

In 1787 the Constitutional Convention framed the Constitution. Once it was signed the Federal U.S. government was established.

—Ed.

**[See the [previous page](#) for a practical example—alluded to by Shoghi Effendi—of the application of Federalism to America’s 13 original colonies.]**





“ever-increasing **spiritual** receptiveness, which mankind, in its progress towards maturity, has invariably manifested”

"They differ," explains Baha'u'llah in that same epistle, "only in the intensity of their revelation and the comparative potency of their light." And this, not by reason of any inherent incapacity of any one of them to reveal in a fuller measure the glory of the Message with which He has been entrusted, but rather because of the immaturity and unpreparedness of the age He lived in to apprehend and absorb the full potentialities latent in that Faith.

"Know of a certainty," explains Baha'u'llah, "that in every Dispensation the light of Divine Revelation has been vouchsafed to men in direct proportion to their spiritual capacity. Consider the sun. How feeble its rays the moment it appears above the horizon. How gradually its warmth and potency increase as it approaches its zenith, enabling meanwhile all created things to adapt themselves to the growing intensity of its light. How steadily it declines until it reaches its setting-point. Were it, all of a sudden, to manifest the energies latent within it, it would, no doubt, cause injury to all created things. . . . In like manner, if the Sun of Truth were suddenly to reveal, at the earliest stages of its manifestation, the full measure of the potencies which the providence of the Almighty has bestowed upon it, the earth of human understanding would waste away and be consumed; for men's hearts would neither sustain the intensity of its revelation, nor be able to mirror forth the radiance of its light. Dismayed and overpowered, they would cease to exist."

It is for this reason, and this reason only, that those who have recognized the Light of God in this age, claim no finality for the Revelation with which they stand identified, nor arrogate to the Faith they have embraced powers and attributes intrinsically superior to, or essentially different from, those which have characterized any of the religious systems that preceded it.”

—*Shoghi Effendi, World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, 58-59.



*The designation ‘Seal of the Prophets’ fully revealeth its high station. The Prophetic Cycle hath verily ended.*

The embryonic Faith, maturing three years after His martyrdom, traversing the period of infancy in the course of the Heroic Age of the Faith is now steadily progressing towards maturity in the present Formative Age, destined to attain full stature in the Golden Age of the Bahá’í Dispensation.

Lastly the Holy Seed of infinite Preciousness, holding within itself incalculable potentialities representing the culmination of the centuries-old process of the evolution of humanity through the energies released by the series of progressive Revelations starting with Adam and concluded by the Revelation of the Seal of the Prophets, marked by the successive appearance of the branches, leaves, buds, blossoms and plucked, after six brief years by the hand of destiny, ground in the mill of martyrdom and oppression but yielding the oil whose first flickering light cast upon the somber, subterranean walls of the Siyáh-Chál of Tihran, whose fire gathered brilliance in Baghdad and shone in full resplendency in its crystal globe in Adrianople, whose rays warmed and illuminated the fringes of the American, European, Australian continents through the tender ministrings of the Center of the Covenant, whose radiance is now overspreading the surface of the globe during the present Formative Age, whose full splendor is destined in the course of The embryonic Faith, maturing three years after His martyrdom, traversing the period of infancy in the course of the Heroic Age of the Faith is now steadily progressing towards maturity in the present **Formative Age**, destined to attain full stature in the **Golden Age** of the **Bahá’í Dispensation**.

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brilliance in Baghdad and shone in full resplendency in its crystal globe in Adrianople, whose rays warmed and illuminated the fringes of the American, European, Australian continents through the tender ministrings of the **Center of the Covenant**, whose radiance is now overspreading the surface of the globe during the present Formative Age, whose full splendor is destined in the course of

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In the Qur’an this verse is found: “*Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but (he is) the Apostle of God, and the Seal of the Prophets: and God has full knowledge of all things.*” 33:40 (Abdu’lloh Yusuf ‘Ali translation)

Among Muslims a widespread belief has grown up that above verse means that no more Messengers will come from God (not withstanding both Shi’is and Sunnis expect a ‘Return’).

“In this Tablet [Suriy-i-Sabr (Surih of Patience)] Bahá’u’lláh rejects the man-made doctrine of finality of religion, explains the meaning of the ‘Seal of the Prophets’, upholds the principle of the continuity of Divine Revelation and states that God will send His Manifestations till the end which has no end. He moreover condemns the divines and the learned of Islam for their blindness and claims that they had never partaken of true knowledge nor discovered the mysteries of the Cause of God, and were wandering in the wilderness of self and passion. He rebukes them for denying the truth of the Revelation of the Bab and for putting Him to death, extols His station, testifies that He manifested the beauty of God, and states that ere long the whole of mankind will recognize Him.

He makes a similar statement concerning the future victory of the Cause in another passage in which He rebukes those who have repudiated the Faith and arisen against it. He warns them that all their efforts to uproot the tree of the Cause of God will ultimately fail, and again prophesies that the day will come when all the peoples of the world will embrace His Faith.

—*Revelation of Bahá’u’lláh*, Vol. 1, 272.



## “the Center of the Covenant”



'Abdu'l-Bahá (1844-1921)  
Head of the Bahá'í Faith 1892-1921

In the Will and Testament of Bahá'u'lláh, 'Abdu'l-Bahá was named Center of the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh and authorized Interpreter of the Bahá'í Revelation.

The Master was freed from Prison by the Young Turk Revolution of 1908. In 1909 He placed the remains of the Báb in His tomb on Mt. Carmel.

Between 1911 and 1913 'Abdu'l-Bahá embarked on a Western Tour. He visited Europe (twice) and spent nine months (April-December) in the United States and Canada.

He passed away in Haifa in November 1921 and is buried within the Shrine of the Báb on Mt. Carmel in Haifa.



**Súratu'l-Haykal**  
(Surih of the Temple)

One of the most momentous of the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh is the Suriy-i-Haykal or Súratu'l-Haykal (Surih of the Temple). Bahá'u'lláh ordered the Surih and the Tablets to the Kings to be copied in the form of a pentacle symbolizing the human temple. The Tablets were copied in the following order: the Suriy-i-Haykal itself, then the Tablet to Pope Pius IX, the Tablet to Napoleon III, the Tablet to Czar Alexander II, the Tablet to Queen Victoria and the Tablet to Nasiri'd-Din Shah.

Associating this with the prophecy of Zechariah in the Old Testament, Bahá'u'lláh concludes the Suriy-i-Haykal with these words:

*Thus have We built the Temple with the hands of power and might, could ye but know it. This is the Temple promised you in the Book. Draw ye nigh unto it. This is that which profiteth you, could ye but comprehend it. Be fair, O peoples of the earth! Which is preferable, this, or a temple which is built of clay? Set your faces towards it. Thus have ye been commanded by God, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting. Follow ye His bidding, and praise ye God, your Lord, for that which He hath bestowed upon you. He verily, is the Truth. No God is there but He. He revealeth what He pleaseth, through His Words 'Be and it is.'*

Throughout the Tablet, the Pen of the Most High addresses the Haykal (Temple) and reveals the

glory and majesty with which it is invested. In answer to a question, Bahá'u'lláh has stated that the Haykal which is addressed in this Surih is the Person of Bahá'u'lláh, and so is the voice which addresses the Haykal. It is fascinating to know that the One Who speaks with the voice of God in this Tablet is identical with the One spoken to.

In this Surih it is stated that the Haykal has been made a mirror to reflect the sovereignty of God and to manifest His Beauty and Grandeur to all mankind. It has been given the power to do whatsoever It desires. Oceans of knowledge and utterance have been placed within Its heart, and It has been made the Manifestation of God's own Self for all who are in heaven and on earth.

Speaking in this Surih of the transcendent glory with which the Haykal is invested, Bahá'u'lláh states:

*Naught is seen in My temple but the Temple of God and in My beauty but His Beauty, and in My being but His Being, and in My self but His Self, and in My movement but His Movement and in My acquiescence but His Acquiescence, and in My pen but His Pen, the Mighty, the All-Praised.*

*There hath not been in My soul but the Truth, and in Myself naught could be seen but God.*

To fully appreciate the majesty and power of this outstanding work of Bahá'u'lláh in the absence of a translation is impossible. Suffice it to say that every time He addresses the Haykal He unveils a new facet of God's Revelation, as if opening a new door leading to some mystery enshrined in His Writings, a mystery hitherto hidden from the eyes of men. If the pure in heart is enabled to have just a glimpse of this infinite realm of divine Revelation which is beyond his comprehension, such a glimpse can endow his soul with an insight which no human agency can ever hope to confer upon it.

Súratu'l-Haykal continued ... ➔

In one of His Tablets referring to the vastness and richness of His Revelation, Bahá'u'lláh states:

*... immerse yourselves in this Ocean in whose depths lay hidden the pearls of wisdom and of utterance...*

These words of Bahá'u'lláh become a reality when the believer, in a state of detachment from this world, meditates upon the verses of the Suriy-i-Haykal. For he will find many such pearls hidden within its verses. The concept of the Haykal (Temple), in the form of the human temple and representing the Person of Bahá'u'lláh, in itself invokes many thoughts and opens many doors to a deeper understanding of His Revelation. Whereas the human temple is made of flesh and bone, the Haykal is constituted of the Word of God. It is portrayed vividly by Bahá'u'lláh in this celebrated Surih, and He adds more mystery and realism to it when He addresses some limbs and organs of that Temple as well as the letters (H, Y, K, and L) which constitute the word.

Every word and letter uttered by the Manifestation of God assumes meaning and significance beyond the understanding of man. For example, there are lengthy Tablets revealed by the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh explaining the meaning of only one letter mentioned in the Holy Books of older religions. We have already given examples of this in a previous volume. In the Suriy-i-Haykal, Bahá'u'lláh reveals the significance of the letters which form the word 'Haykal', and the potentialities with which each one has been invested by God. It is difficult to convey these without having access to the words of Bahá'u'lláh. Bahá'u'lláh states that the Haykal is the source of the creation of the new race of men, that through each one of its letters, God will raise up wonderful beings whose numbers are known to none except Him and whose faces will shine with the radiance of their Lord. These souls will circle around the Cause of God as a shadow moves around the sun. They will protect the Faith from the onslaught of the deniers and will offer up their lives willingly for the promotion of His Cause among men. This

Tablet is replete with glad-tidings of the appearance of a band of devoted believers whom Bahá'u'lláh refers to as the new race of men. These words are revealed in the Suriy-i-Haykal:

*. The day is approaching when God will have, by an act of His Will, raised up a race of men the nature of which is inscrutable to all save God, the All-Powerful, The Self-Subsisting.*

Bahá'u'lláh exhorts the eye of the Haykal not to gaze upon the world of creation but to focus only upon the beauty of His Lord. He promises the advent of a day when He will have created, through this eye, people of penetrating insight who will see the signs and tokens of His Revelation with a vision bestowed upon them through His bounty and favour. To the ear of the Haykal, Bahá'u'lláh gives counsel to become deaf to the voices of the ungodly and to listen to the melodies of His Revelation. Again, He states that through this ear He will create a race of men with ears purified and worthy to hear the Word of God as revealed by Him in this day. The tongue of the Haykal is also addressed in the same vein—it has been created to mention the name of God and celebrate His praise. He gives the joyous tidings that through the creation of this tongue, God will raise up souls who will conquer the hearts of men through the power of their utterance and the sway of their word.

Bahá'u'lláh calls on the Haykal to stretch out its hands upon all the dwellers of earth and heaven, and to hold within its grasp the reins of the Cause of God. He prophesies that through these hands, He will soon create hands of power and might through whom God will reveal His omnipotence and ascendancy to all the peoples of the world. Concerning these hands Bahá'u'lláh reveals in the Surih:

*He will, ere long, out of the Bosom of Power draw forth the Hands of Ascendancy and Might—Hands who will arise to win victory for this Youth and who will purge mankind from the defilement*

Súratu'l-Haykal continued ... ➡

*of the outcast and the ungodly. These Hands will gird up their loins to champion the Faith of God, and will, in My name the self-subsistent, the mighty, subdue the peoples and kindreds of the earth.*

The heart of the Haykal, Bahá'u'lláh states, is the source of all knowledge. Of this knowledge He declares:

*Within the treasury of Our Wisdom there lies unrevealed a knowledge, one word of which, if we chose to divulge it to mankind, would cause every human being to recognize the Manifestation of God and to acknowledge His omniscience, would enable every one to discover the secrets of all the sciences, and to attain so high a station as to find himself wholly independent of all past and future learning. Other knowledges We do as well possess, not a single letter of which We can disclose, nor do We find humanity able to hear even the barest reference to their meaning. Thus have We informed you of the Knowledge of God, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.*

Bahá'u'lláh affirms that through the outpouring of knowledge from the heart of the Haykal, He will soon raise up scientists of great calibre who will bring about such marvellous technological achievements that no one can as yet imagine them. This prophecy of Bahá'u'lláh has already been fulfilled—and this is only the beginning. We have previously stated that the Revelation of the Báb ushered in a new era in the fields of science and technology, especially in communications, to prepare the way for the coming of Bahá'u'lláh. His Message being for all mankind, it is only logical that the same God who has revealed it would also create the means for its universal propagation, so that the news of the coming of Bahá'u'lláh might reach every part of the world.

The technological developments which have taken place in the field of communications since the advent of the Báb bear ample testimony to this. As the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh grew, the means of communication kept pace with it. During the early

days of Bahá'u'lláh's ministry, His disciples had to travel mainly on foot or by donkey and mule to teach the Faith, but it did not take very long until some began to travel by steamship. They took His Message to India and other countries in this way.

Soon after the passing of Bahá'u'lláh, the time had come for the expansion of the Faith throughout the world, especially the West, but the pace was still slow. When 'Abdu'l-Baha Journeyed to the West, He travelled by steamship, railway and automobile. The Baha'i communities in those days were, for the most part, isolated from each other and movement was slow. But today the Baha'i community is engaged in enormous teaching activity covering the whole world. Wherever there is freedom of religion they are bringing the message of Bahá'u'lláh to the notice of their countrymen and consequently more people embrace the Faith. Hundreds of national and international teaching projects, and administrative functions involving peoples of all nations and races, are carried out in the five continents of the globe. All these activities are made possible by using the fast and marvellous system of communications which has become available in recent times. The Baha'is believe that this is no coincidence: that God, having called the peoples of the world to unity through the message of Bahá'u'lláh, has also provided the means by which that unity may be established. In the meantime, humanity benefits without realizing why these marvellous inventions have come about.

Those, who are unfamiliar with the Faith or have not recognized the station of Bahá'u'lláh will no doubt view with scepticism the argument that the advent of the modern communications system is primarily due to the appearance of a universal religion in the world. It seems far-fetched and unacceptable. But in surveying the progress of their Faith, the followers of Bahá'u'lláh have seen that whenever the propagation of the Faith or the building of its Administrative Order needed some new material means, they were miraculously

Súratu'l-Haykal continued ... ➔

provided in time. Some of the new inventions which have played a vital part in the development of the Faith have come about just in time to serve a particular need. To cite one example of many: Bahá'u'lláh revealed many Tablets, Epistles and Books which, if compiled, would produce about one hundred volumes. 'Abdu'l-Baha's writings are no less in range. The Writings of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Baha contain, among other things, teachings both spiritual and social, laws, exhortations and explanations about many subjects including man, the purpose of his life and his relationship to God. Added to these are the voluminous writings of Shoghi Effendi, the Guardian of the Faith. In addition to his famous works, he has written no less than twenty-six thousand letters, some of them so lengthy that they warranted being printed in the form of a book. His writings contain invaluable guidance which, as the authorized Interpreter of the Words of Bahá'u'lláh, he has given to the Baha'i world. It can be seen therefore that the Baha'i Holy Writings are enormous in range and contain matters of vital interest for all humanity. When the Universal House of Justice, the supreme governing body of the Baha'i community, came into being in 1963, one of the most essential needs was the collating of all the Writings of the Central Figures of the Faith and the making of a comprehensive index of all the subjects they contained. This was a vital necessity for the supreme institution of the Faith which had to have access to each and every subject recorded in these Writings, so that it could guide the Baha'i community in accordance with the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh, and also legislate whenever feasible on matters which are not explicitly mentioned in these Writings.

Up until the formation of the Universal House of Justice, it was impossible even to attempt to make this comprehensive index. Such a colossal undertaking, involving the provision of a detailed list of every subject within such a vast range of writings, would not have been a practical proposition given the small size of the Baha'i community because of the non-existence of technological aids at that time. The invention of

these aids, such as photocopiers and electronic processors, and their commercial use, were almost synchronized with the birth of the Supreme Body of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh. And soon this vital task was undertaken. Had it not been for this timely development, insignificant as it may seem today, it is difficult to imagine how the Universal House of Justice could have discharged its sacred functions in the Baha'i world effectively, bearing in mind that prior to taking every major decision, the Supreme Body has to refer to the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, 'Abdu'l-Baha and Shoghi Effendi and take into consideration their words which have a bearing on the subject.

Indeed, as the believers play their part in the propagation and consolidation of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh, God provides the means for its progress and eventual establishment as a world religion for all mankind. Both the constructive and destructive forces in the world assist in its promotion. The process of the breaking up of the old order is in itself a positive step, paving the way for the spreading of the new.

On the other hand, through the transforming power of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, God is creating a new race of men who arise to champion His Cause. Through the sacrificial outpourings of their substance and resources, they attract the spiritual forces which together with all the material aids sent down by Providence, propel the Cause of God forward.

Bahá'u'lláh in the Suriy-i-Haykal rebukes the people of the Bayan for their blindness to His Revelation in spite of the fact that the Báb had nurtured and prepared them for His Coming. He identifies Himself with the Báb in the Suriy-i-Haykal when He addresses the Bábís:

*Had the Primal Point (The Báb) been someone else beside Me as ye claim, and had attained My presence, verily He would have never allowed*

Súratu'l-Haykal continued ... ➔

*Himself to be separated from Me, but rather We would have had mutual delights with each other in My Days.*

Bahá'u'lláh in the Surih expatiates on His sufferings at the hands of the breakers of the Covenant of the Báb, those who denied His trust and turned away from His Cause. He describes how he had chosen one of his brothers, Mirza Yahya, showered upon him a sprinkling from the Ocean of His Knowledge, clothed him with the ornament of a name, and exalted him to such a station that all the believers turned to him in devotion and protected him from every tribulation. Yet when Mirza Yahya witnessed the ascendancy of the Bearer of the Message of God for this age, he rose up against Him, attempted to take His life and repudiated His Cause. In a challenging tone Bahá'u'lláh declares that if the followers of Mirza Yahya did not turn to Him [Bahá'u'lláh] and lend their support, God would assist Him with His supreme Hosts, both visible and invisible, and would assuredly raise up a new race of men who would champion His Cause and make Him victorious in the end.

Bahá'u'lláh in the Suriy-i-Haykal reveals that the power of God is beyond the comprehension of man. Through this power all created things have come into being. If it be His will, He can in one instant take life from everything and in another bestow a new life upon it. These are His Own Words:

*It is in Our power, should We wish it, to enable a speck of floating dust to generate, in less than the twinkling of an eye, suns of infinite, of unimaginable splendour, to cause a dewdrop to develop into vast and numberless oceans, to Infuse into every letter such a force as to empower it to unfold all the knowledge of past and future ages.*

He further explains that created things may be likened to the leaves of a tree which derive their sustenance and life from the root but outwardly seem to be flourishing independently of it.

It is in the Suriy-i-Haykal that, while admonishing the people for their perversity and blindness to His revelation, Bahá'u'lláh refers to the Manifestation of God who will come after Him. These are His words:

*By those words which I have revealed, Myself is not intended, but rather He Who will come after Me. To it is witness God, the All-Knowing... Deal not with Him as ye have dealt with Me.*

There is no doubt that this passage refers to the Manifestation of God who comes after Bahá'u'lláh, since Shoghi Effendi has confirmed this in His writings. There is a similar passage revealed in another Tablet concerning the next Manifestation of God:

*I am not apprehensive for My own self, My fears are for Him Who will be sent down unto you after Me—Him Who will be invested with great sovereignty and mighty dominion.'*

However, the following passage from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, which sounds similar to the passages quoted above, relates to the person of 'Abdu'l-Baha:

*By God, O people! Mine eye weepeth, and the eye of 'Ali (the Báb) weepeth amongst the Concourse on high, and Mine heart crieth out, and the heart of Muhammad crieth out within the Most Glorious Tabernacle, and My soul shouteth and the souls of the Prophets shout before them that are endued with understanding... My sorrow is not for myself, but for Him Who shall come after Me, in the shadow of My Cause, with manifest and undoubted sovereignty, inasmuch as they will not welcome His appearance, will repudiate His signs, will dispute His sovereignty, will contend with Him, and will betray His Cause...*

In the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh there are references to the symbolic appearance of the Maid of Heaven

Súratu'l-Haykal continued ... ➔



to Him. In the Suriy-i-Haykal He describes in a fascinating manner the Proclamation of His mission by the Maiden symbolizing the ‘Most Great Spirit’ which animated Him throughout His Ministry. This is how He reveals the descent of this mysterious Spirit upon Himself: *While engulfed in tribulations I heard a most wondrous, a most sweet voice, calling above My head. Turning My face, I beheld a Maiden—the embodiment of the remembrance of the name of My Lord—suspended in the air before Me. So rejoiced was she in her very soul that her countenance shone with the ornament of the good-pleasure of God, and her cheeks glowed with the brightness of the All-Merciful. Betwixt earth and heaven she was raising a call which captivated the hearts and minds of men. She was imparting to both My inward and outer being tidings which rejoiced My soul, and the souls of God’s honoured servants.: Pointing with her finger unto My head, she addressed all who are in heaven and all who are on earth, saying: ‘By God! This is the Best-Beloved of the worlds, and yet ye comprehend not. This is the Beauty of God amongst you, and the power of His sovereignty within you, could ye but understand. This is the Mystery of God and His Treasure, the Cause of God and His glory unto all who are in the kingdoms of Revelation and of creation, if ye be of them that I perceive.’*

It is impossible for man to understand the nature of the Manifestations of God and the spirit which motivates them. Just as it is impossible for a creature in the animal kingdom to appreciate the nature of man, so it is beyond the capacity of a human being to grasp the inner reality of God’s Messengers, for they abide in a spiritual realm far above the reach of men. In former Dispensations the Holy Spirit manifested itself to the Founders of the great world religions and enabled them to reveal the teachings of God to humanity. But a human being can never understand nor experience this. In order to convey to his followers that He was animated by the power of God, each Manifestation of God has spoken in symbolic language concerning the appearance of the Holy Spirit to Him. In the Holy Writings of former

religions we read how Moses heard the voice of God through the Burning Bush or how the Dove descended upon Christ or how Muhammad received His Revelation through the Angel Gabriel. All these are different symbols of the same entity, the Holy Spirit, which acts as an intermediary between God and His Manifestations. This link is similar to the rays of the sun by which energy is transmitted to the planets. Bahá’u’lláh, being the Supreme Manifestation of God, whose advent has been hailed in the Heavenly Books as the advent of the Day of God Himself, has stated in some of His Tablets that the Holy Spirit was created through one word of His. And in the Suriy-i-Haykal He declares:

*The Holy Spirit Itself hath been generated through the agency of a single letter revealed by this Most Great Spirit, if ye be of them that comprehend.*

In His Writings, Bahá’u’lláh has indicated that whereas in past Dispensations the Prophets and Messengers of God received their Revelation through an intermediary, in this Dispensation the voice of God may be heard directly from the Person of Bahá’u’lláh. Affirming this in one of His Tablets, Bahá’u’lláh states that the same voice which Moses heard through the Burning Bush may be heard directly from Bahá’u’lláh in this Day.

In reading such statements, however, one may be erroneously led to think that Bahá’u’lláh is identifying Himself with the Godhead. Such a conclusion is due to our lack of understanding of the infinite Realms of God. Our minds are limited, while the world of the Manifestations of God is beyond our capacity to appreciate. Bahá’u’lláh has clearly stated that God in His essence is unknowable and inaccessible to all, including His Manifestations. In one of His prayers Bahá’u’lláh describes His relationship with God in these words:

Súratu’l-Haykal continued ... ➔

*When I contemplate, O my God, the relationship that bindeth me to Thee, I am moved to proclaim to all created things ‘verily I am God!’; and when I consider my own self, lo, I find it coarser than clay!*

The station of Bahá’u’lláh is that of the Supreme Manifestation of God. Only by reading His own words and meditating on them in a prayerful attitude may we be enabled to acquire a limited understanding of His divine powers and attributes, Whom Shoghi Effendi describes as ‘transcendental in His majesty, serene, awe-inspiring, unapproachably glorious’.

The Suriy-i-Haykal contains many challenging themes. Every line is charged with enormous power and every subject is indicative of the greatness of the Cause of Bahá’u’lláh, such greatness that sometimes it staggers the imagination. Although extensive parts of the Tablets which are added to the Surih have been translated into English by Shoghi Effendi and published, only a few passages from the Surih itself have been translated. We have already included most of them in this account, and quote the following in conclusion:

*The onrushing winds of the grace of God have passed over all things. Every creature hath been endowed with all the potentialities it can carry. And yet the peoples of the world have denied this grace! Every tree hath been endowed with the choicest fruits, every ocean enriched with the most luminous gems. Man, himself, hath been invested with the gifts of understanding and knowledge. The whole creation hath been made the recipient of the revelation of the All-Merciful, and the earth the repository of things inscrutable to all except God, the Truth, the Knower of things unseen. The time is approaching when every created thing will have cast its burden. Glorified be God Who hath vouchsafed this grace that encompasseth all things, whether seen or unseen!*

—Adib Taherzadeh, *Revelation of Bahá’u’lláh*, Vol. 3, 133-146



“The Spirit that has **incarnated itself** in the institutions of a rising Faith”

“Few will fail to recognize that the Spirit breathed by Baha'u'llah upon the world, and which is manifesting itself with varying degrees of intensity through the efforts consciously displayed by His avowed supporters and indirectly through certain humanitarian organizations, can never permeate and exercise an abiding influence upon mankind unless and *until it incarnates itself in a visible Order*, which would bear His name, wholly identify itself with His principles, and function in conformity with His laws. That Baha'u'llah in His Book of Aqdas, and later `Abdu'l-Baha in His Will—a document which confirms, supplements, and correlates the provisions of the Aqdas—have set forth in their entirety those essential elements for the constitution of the world Baha'i Commonwealth, no one who has read them will deny. According to these divinely-ordained administrative principles, the Dispensation of Baha'u'llah—the Ark of human salvation--must needs be modeled. From them, all future blessings must flow, and upon them its inviolable authority must ultimately rest.”

—Shoghi Effendi, *World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, 19. Underline and italics added.



“the catastrophic fall of mighty kingdoms and empires,  
on the eve of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s departure”

## EMPIRES THAT FELL BETWEEN 1918-1922

- 1917 Russian Revolution.
- 1918 Ex-Czar Nicholas II of Russia and his family executed.
- 1918 Collapse of Turkish resistance in Palestine.
- 1918 Revolution in Berlin. Czar William II abdicates.
- 1918 Armistice signed between Allies and Germany Nov. 11.
- 1919 Hapsburg dynasty exiled from Austria.
- 1919 Bela Kun regime in Hungary overthrown.
- 1920 End of Russian civil war.
- 1920 Ghandi emerges as India’s leader in its struggle for independence.
- 1921 Reza Khan (1878-1944) carries out coup d’etat in Tihran. The Qajar Dynasty ends.
- 1922 Sultanate of Turkey overthrown and an independent republic proclaimed.
- 1922 Soviet States form U.S.S.R.
- 1922 Benito Mussolini marches on Rome and he and his blackshirts come to power.



“The dissolution of the German Empire,  
the humiliating defeat inflicted upon its ruler”

The emperor believed that he ruled by divine right. Foreign affairs interested him, but his policies were contradictory and confused. He professed deep friendship for Great Britain but drove that country into an alliance with France and Russia by his aggressive program of colonial, commercial, and naval expansion. Similarly, his policy of friendship with Russia and support of Russian ambitions in East Asia was negated by his encouragement of Austro-Hungarian actions in the Balkans. He believed firmly in the efficacy of the Triple Alliance of Germany with Austria-Hungary and Italy as a deterrent to war. Imperial policy under his impulsive guidance severely aggravated the international frictions that culminated in World War I.

During the war William's position became increasingly that of a figurehead. Realizing his own incapacity as a military leader, he left the responsibility for military decisions increasingly to the German generals Paul von Hindenburg and Erich Ludendorff. He ignored the 1917 peace resolutions submitted by the Reichstag and urged continuation of the war. After the German offensive of 1918 failed, unrest mounted among the German armies and people, and William left his country and went to the Netherlands. He was forced to abdicate his throne on November 9, 1918. During the peace negotiations at Versailles, various representatives of the victorious Allies urged vainly that William be extradited and tried as a war criminal. He spent his remaining years in complete seclusion at Doorn Castle in the Netherlands. After the death of the former empress in 1921, William married Hermine,



Kaiser William II (1859-1941) He was also a grandson of Queen Victoria.

princess of Schönaich-Carolath. He lived to see the resurgence of German armed power; and after his death he was buried with military honors by order of Adolf Hitler.

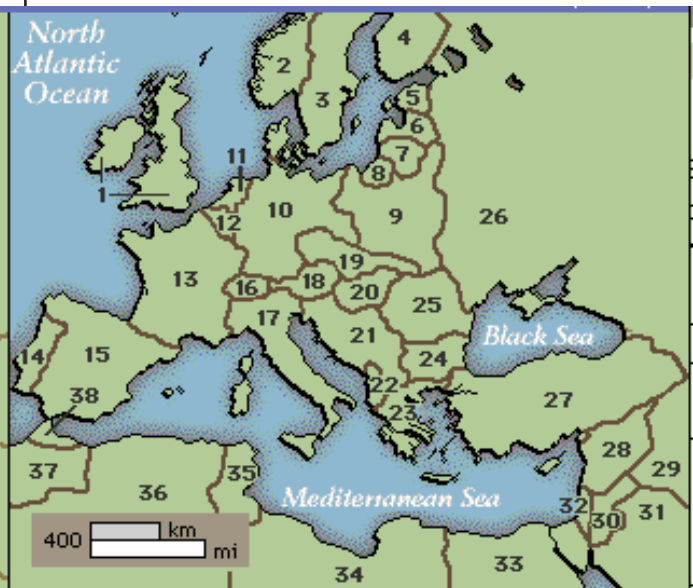
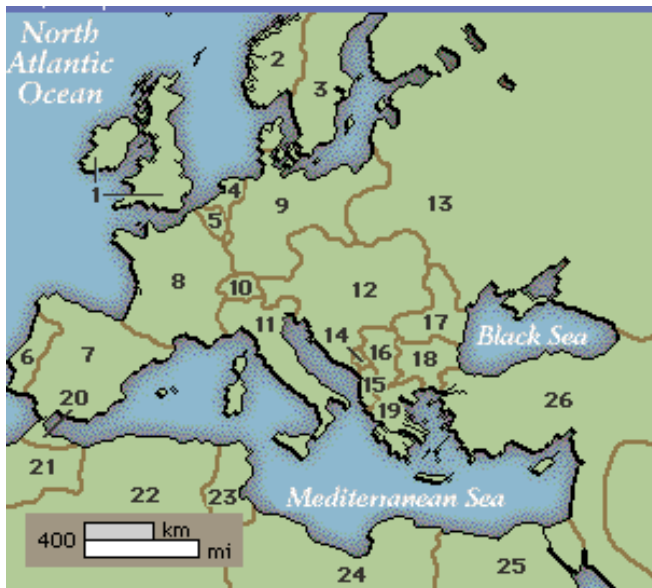
*Humiliating defeat continued ... ➔*



Wilhelm II (1859-1941)

**'LAMENTATIONS OF BERLIN'**  
 [Addressed to Wilhelm I, father of Wilhelm II]

In one of His Tablets written before the First World War (1914-1918), 'Abdul-Bahá explained that Bahá'u'lláh's reference to having seen the banks of the Rhine "covered with gore" related to the Franco-Prussian War (1870-1871), and that there was more suffering to come. In *God Passes By* Shoghi Effendi states that the "oppressively severe treaty" [Versailles] that was imposed on Germany following its defeat in the First World War "provoked 'the lamentations of Berlin' which half a century before, had been ominously prophesied". KA pp 217-218



- |               |                    |                |                   |              |                |               |                   |                |
|---------------|--------------------|----------------|-------------------|--------------|----------------|---------------|-------------------|----------------|
| 1 Gt Britain  | 9 Germany          | 16 Serbia      | 24 Libya          | 1 Gt Britain | 8 E. Prussia   | 16 Switz.     | 24 Bulgaria       | 31 Arabia      |
| 2 Norway      | 10 Switz.          | 17 Romania     | 25 Egypt          | 2 Norway     | 9 Poland       | 17 Italy      | 25 Romania        | 32 Palestine   |
| 3 Sweden      | 11 Italy           | 18 Bulgaria    | 26 Ottoman Empire | 3 Sweden     | 10 Germany     | 18 Austria    | 26 USSR           | 33 Egypt       |
| 4 Netherlands | 12 Austria-Hungary | 19 Greece      |                   | 4 Finland    | 11 Netherlands | 19 Czech.     | 27 Ottoman Empire | 34 Libya       |
| 5 Belgium     | 13 Russia          | 20 Sp. Morocco |                   | 5 Estonia    | 12 Belgium     | 20 Hungary    | 21 Yugoslavia     | 35 Tunisia     |
| 6 Portugal    | 14 Montenegro      | 21 Morocco     |                   | 6 Latvia     | 13 France      | 21 Yugoslavia | 28 Syria          | 36 Algeria     |
| 7 Spain       | 15 Albania         | 22 Algeria     |                   | 7 Lithuania  | 14 Portugal    | 22 Albania    | 29 Iraq           | 37 Morocco     |
| 8 France      |                    | 23 Tunisia     |                   |              | 15 Spain       | 23 Greece     | 30 Trans-jordan   | 38 Fr. Morocco |

**Europe Before and After World War I**

After World War I, the map of Europe changed a great deal. Under the terms of the Treaty of Versailles, Germany gave up territory to Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, France, and Poland. Those countries, as well as Romania and Yugoslavia, received land from Austria-Hungary, which existed no more. Most Arab lands, formerly part of the Ottoman Empire, were placed under French and British rule.

## Peoples of Austria-Hungary in 1914.

Conflicts of nationality. The annexation crisis had repercussions among the other Slav nationalities in the monarchy. For several years Czechs had been attracted by the Pan-Slav movement, and in July 1908 a Pan-Slav congress was held in Prague. During the diplomatic crisis of the following winter, the Czechs unabashedly took the side of the Serbs, and, on the day of the 60th anniversary of Francis Joseph's accession to the throne, martial law had to be declared in Prague. National strife broke out all over the monarchy, and parliamentary activities were all but blocked by filibustering and the riotous activities of the deputies. Prime Minister Beck had resigned in November 1908; his successor, Richard, Baron von Bienerth, after having accomplished little with a cabinet of civil servants, tried to appease the nationalities by including Landsmannminister (national representatives) in his Cabinet (February 1909). (see also Index: Pan-Slavism)

Obstruction in parliament continued. The Germans, in control of the government and the central administration, continued to assign to the monarchy the role of an outpost of German culture; the Slavs increasingly wanted to make Austria the home of Slav national aspirations. The Czech agrarian leader Frantisek Udrzal stated in parliament: "We wish to save the Austrian parliament from utter ruin, but we wish to save it for the Slavs of Austria, who form two-thirds of the population." A population census taken in 1910 confirmed the Slav claim: out of the 28,324,940 inhabitants of the western half of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, only 35.58 percent regarded themselves as German; 17.77 percent regarded themselves as Poles, 12.58 percent as Ruthenians, 23.02 percent as Czechs or Slovaks, 4.48 percent as Slovenes, 2.8 percent as Serbs or Croats, and 2.75 percent as Italians. Slav predominance was weakened by the attitude of the Poles, who remained loyal to the central government, allowing the national conflict to assume the character of a primarily Czech-German quarrel. Even the Social Democratic Party could not overcome nationalist antagonism. In 1899, at the party congress at Brünn, the Social Democrats had presented a national reform program based on democratic federalism, granting the right of national decisions to territorial units formed on a basis of nationality. Karl Renner and Otto Bauer, who later became leaders of German-Austrian socialism, drafted various programs for the solution of the nationality problem in books published between 1900 and 1910. But these efforts could not prevent the socialists from splitting along national lines too, and in



Flag of the Austro-Hungarian Empire

1910 the Czech socialists declared themselves independent of the Social Democratic Party.

### Party rivalries.

Such national differences weakened the socialist position in the elections of 1911. More than 50 parties had competed in the campaign, and, since the German nationalist parties had allied in the Deutscher Nationalverband, they managed to return to parliament as the strongest single party, gaining 104 seats out of 516. The Christian Socialists, weakened by personal rivalry, suffered heavy losses, winning only 76 seats. The Social Democrats received 44 seats and the Czech Social Democrats 24. The Czech parties were badly divided, those representing the Czech middle class gaining 64 seats. Bienerth found himself unable to form a workable ministry, and he was replaced by Gautsch, who tried to reconcile the Germans and the Czechs. For a while negotiations seemed quite successful, but extremist incidents deadlocked the talks, and the Gautsch Cabinet was replaced by a new ministry headed by Karl, Count von Stürgkh (November 1911). Unable to deal with the nationality problem in a parliamentary fashion, Stürgkh repeatedly suspended the Reichsrat. It was characteristic of the general political climate in Europe that Stürgkh had to concentrate his legislative program on the improvement of Austrian armament, for international crises overshadowed the nationality conflict.

### Conflict with Serbia.

Since the Bosnian crisis of 1909, Austrian diplomats had been convinced that war with Serbia was bound to come. Aehrenthal died in February 1912, at a moment when an Italian-Turkish conflict over Tripoli had provoked anti-Turkish sentiment in the Balkan states. Leopold, Count Berchtold, who directed Austro-Hungarian foreign policy from 1912 on, did not have the qualities required in such a critical period. Aehrenthal had been able to silence the warmongering activities of Conrad, who continued to advocate preventive war against Italy and Serbia, but

*Austro-Hungarian Empire* continued ... ➡

Berchtold yielded to the aggressive policies of the military and the younger members of his ministry. During the Balkan Wars (1912-13), fought by the Balkan states over the remnants of the Ottoman Empire, Austria-Hungary twice tried to force Serbia to withdraw from positions gained by threatening it with an ultimatum. In February and October 1913, military action against Serbia was contemplated, but in both instances neither Italy nor Germany was willing to guarantee support. Austria-Hungary had to acquiesce in the territorial changes in the Balkan peninsula, changes that eliminated the Turks from Europe. By supporting Bulgaria against Serbia, Austria-Hungary alienated Romania, which had shown resentment against the Habsburg monarchy because of the treatment of non-Magyar nationalities in Hungary. Romania thus joined Italy and Serbia in support of irredentist movements inside the Habsburg monarchy. By 1914, leading government circles in Vienna were convinced that offensive action against the foreign protagonists of irredentist claims was essential to the integrity of the empire.

In June 1914 Archduke Francis Ferdinand, the heir of Francis Joseph, participated in army maneuvers in the provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina, disregarding warnings that his visit would arouse considerable hostility. When Francis Ferdinand and his wife were assassinated by a Bosnian nationalist at Sarajevo on June 28, 1914, the Austro-Hungarian foreign office decided to use the opportunity for a final reckoning with the Serbian danger. The support of Germany was sought and received, and the Austro-Hungarian foreign office drafted an ultimatum putting the responsibility for the assassination on the Serbian government and demanding full satisfaction. The attitude of the foreign office was shared by Conrad and by Stürgkh but was opposed by the Hungarian prime minister, István, Count Tisza, who wanted an assurance that a military move against Serbia would not result in territorial acquisitions and thus increase the Serb element in the monarchy. His demand satisfied, Tisza joined the advocates of war. In ministerial meetings on July 15 and 19, a deliberately provocative ultimatum was drafted in words that supposedly excluded the possibility of acceptance by Serbia. The ultimatum was handed to the Serbian government on July 23. The Serbian answer, handed in on time on July 25, was declared insufficient, though Serbia had agreed to all Austro-Hungarian demands except for two that, in effect, entailed constitutional changes in the Serbian government. These were that certain unnamed Serbian officials be dismissed at the whim of Austria-Hungary and that Austro-Hungarian officials participate, on Serbian soil, in the suppression of organizations hostile to Austria-Hungary and in the judicial proceedings against their

members. In its reply, the Serbian government pointed out that such demands were unprecedented in relations between sovereign states but nevertheless agreed to submit the matter to the Permanent Court of Arbitration or to the arbitration of the Great Powers. On receiving this reply, the Austro-Hungarian ambassador left Belgrade, severing diplomatic relations between the two countries. Berchtold and his government were clearly determined to make war on Serbia, regardless of the fact that such action might result in war between the Great Powers. While the European governments frantically tried to offer compromise solutions, Austria decided on a fait accompli. On July 28, 1914, Berchtold asked Francis Joseph to sign the declaration of war, informing him that (see also Index: World War I)

it cannot be excluded that the [Triple] Entente powers [Russia, France, Great Britain] might make another move to bring about a peaceful settlement of the conflict unless a declaration of war establishes a fait accompli [eine klare Situation geschaffen].

In the meantime, the German government had taken control of the situation and, placing German strategic and national plans over Austro-Hungarian interests, had changed the Balkan conflict into a continental war.

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## “the once-great **Holy Roman Empire**”

Holy Roman Empire, German HEILIGES RÖMISCHES REICH, Latin SACRUM ROMANUM IMPERIUM, a complex of lands in western and central Europe that was ruled first by Frankish and then by German kings for 10 centuries, from Charlemagne's coronation in 800 until the renunciation of the imperial title in 1806. The empire and the papacy were the two most important institutions of western Europe during the Middle Ages.

A brief treatment of the Holy Roman Empire follows.

The Roman title of emperor, which had lapsed in western Europe in the 5th century, was revived in 800 by Pope Leo III and conferred on Charlemagne, king of the Franks. After another lapse when the Carolingian line died out, the title of emperor, or Holy Roman emperor, was borne by successive dynasties of German kings almost continuously from the mid-10th century until the abolition of the empire.

The Latin phrase *sacrum Romanum imperium* actually dates only from 1254, though the term holy empire reaches back to 1157, and the term Roman empire was used from 1034 to denote the lands under the emperor Conrad II. The term Roman emperor is older, dating from Otto II (d. 983). The term Holy Roman emperor is a convention adopted by modern historians; it was never officially used. The prospective heir to the throne was called king of the Romans.

The territory of the empire originally included what is now Germany, Austria, the Czech Republic, Switzerland, eastern France, the Low Countries, and parts of northern and central Italy. But its sovereign was usually the German king, and the German lands were always its chief component; after the mid-15th century, it was known as the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation.

Originally allied with the papacy, the empire became involved in a long struggle with the popes for the leadership of Christian Europe between the mid-11th and the mid-13th century. Weakened by the effects of this struggle, the empire was further shaken by the 16th-century Reformation, during which a split developed between the Catholic emperor and those German princes who adopted Protestantism. A series of conflicts followed, climaxed by the Thirty Years' War, which devastated Germany in the period 1618-48. After 1648, the empire was simply a loose collection of semi-independent states under the

nominal authority of the emperor. In this period the French writer Voltaire described it as “neither holy, nor Roman, nor an empire.”

In spite of their bitter quarrels, the empire and the papacy remained closely associated throughout the Middle Ages, and until the beginning of the 16th century the German king, having been elected emperor by the leading German princes, was then crowned by the pope. Maximilian I (reigned 1493-1519) was the first emperor not to be so crowned; his successor, Charles V, did have a papal coronation in 1530, but the custom was abandoned in the war-torn period that followed, and it was never revived. Beginning in the early 15th century, the imperial title and the German kingship became virtually hereditary in the Austrian House of Habsburg (Habsburg-Lorraine after 1740), although formal elections were still held. On Aug. 10, 1804, after Napoleon Bonaparte had declared himself emperor of the French in a bid to usurp the Holy Roman emperor's traditional primacy among European monarchs, Francis II, last of the imperial line, adopted the title “emperor of Austria.” Two years later, on Aug. 6, 1806, he resigned the old title of Holy Roman emperor altogether. The German Empire of 1871-1918 was often called the Second Reich (empire) to indicate its descent from the medieval empire; by the same reasoning, Adolf Hitler referred to Nazi Germany as the Third Reich.

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## “the Conqueror of Napoleon III”

### WIHELM (WILLIAM) I

William I, German in full WILHELM FRIEDRICH LUDWIG (b. March 22, 1797, Berlin—d. March 9, 1888, Berlin), German emperor from 1871, as well as king of Prussia from 1861, a sovereign whose conscientiousness and self-restraint fitted him for collaboration with stronger statesmen in raising his monarchy and the house of Hohenzollern to predominance in Germany.

He was the second son of the future king Frederick William III of Prussia. In 1814 he fought at Bar-sur-Aube in the German War of Liberation against Napoleon I. Subsequently he devoted himself to the Prussian Army and military affairs. In 1840, on the accession of his childless elder brother, Frederick William IV, he became prince of Prussia and heir presumptive.

When revolution broke out in Berlin in March 1848, the conservative William's advocacy of force earned him the sobriquet of "Kartätschenprinz" (Prince of Grapeshot). After a brief exile in England, he returned to Prussia in June 1848, and in 1849 he commanded the troops sent to suppress an insurrection in Baden. William's mistrust of constitutionalism was mitigated by the lessons of 1848, by his exposure to English political ideas, and by the influence of his consort, Augusta of Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach. (He married this witty and temperamental princess in 1829, after renouncing a youthful love affair with Eliza Radziwill.) Appointed military governor of Rhineland Province in 1849, he made his residence at Coblenz, a centre of opposition to the reactionary policies of Berlin. He described Otto von Bismarck's ideas as "schoolboy's politics."

From October 1858 William was regent for his ailing brother, and, on Jan. 2, 1861, William succeeded to the Prussian throne. As regent he made himself popular by proclaiming a "New Era" of liberalism, but he appointed a ministry comprising pronounced conservatives as well as moderate liberals.

The problems raised for Prussia in 1859 by the wars for Italian independence were beyond his capacity: while he favoured an alliance with Austria against the France of Napoleon III, he insisted that Prussia have the supreme command on the Rhenish front; and the Austro-French armistice of Villafranca took him by surprise.

On internal affairs William's fundamental

conservatism reasserted itself. Backed by his war minister, Albrecht von Roon, and by the chief of the military cabinet, Edwin von Manteuffel, the King insisted on a three-year term of military conscription, which the liberal lower chamber rejected in 1862. William thereupon was ready to abdicate but was dissuaded by Bismarck, whom he installed as prime minister during this crisis.

After the Prussian victory in the Seven Weeks' War against Austria in 1866, the King, despite their frequent disagreements, realized that Bismarck was more necessary to Prussia than he himself was. In 1870, when the Hohenzollern candidature to the Spanish throne was leading to the Franco-German War, William was far more cautious than Bismarck; during the war, he arbitrated between his chief advisers, Bismarck and Helmuth von Moltke. He was distressed by the Kulturkampf that Bismarck and the liberals conducted against the Roman Catholic Church, but in 1877, when Bismarck made his last appeal to be relieved of office, William answered: "Never."

William was so imbued with the traditions of the Prussian monarchy that it was painful for him to accept Bismarck's foundation of the German Reich and the imperial title, which came to him by a sham offer (arranged by Bismarck) from the German princes. William was acclaimed German emperor (not "emperor of Germany," which he thought more suitable) at Versailles, in conquered France, on Jan. 18, 1871. General indignation at the two attempts made on his life in 1878 (by Max Hödel on May 11 and by K.E. Nobiling, who seriously wounded him, on June 2) was expressed in popular support for Bismarck's anti-Socialist legislation.

The standard biography, *Kaiser Wilhelm I*, by Erich Marcks, was published in 1897 (9th ed., 1943).

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**Napoleon III (1808-1873)**, emperor of the French (1852-1870), who revived the Napoleonic empire in the mid-19th century and led France to defeat in the Franco-Prussian War (1870-1871).

Charles Louis Napoleon Bonaparte was born in Paris, the third and last son of King Louis and Queen Hortense of Holland, and thus a nephew of **Napoleon I**. Because the Bonaparte family was banished from France after his uncle's downfall, Louis Napoleon was educated privately in Switzerland and Bavaria. His mother schooled him in the glories of the Napoleonic legend and set his course toward the recovery of family power. Toward that end, he wrote pamphlets and treatises to formulate a political program, portraying himself as social reformer, political liberal, military expert, and proponent of agricultural and industrial development. He also led two unsuccessful armed attempts to overthrow the regime of King Louis Philippe, in 1836 and 1840. Imprisoned for life after the latter, he escaped in 1846, calling renewed attention to himself.

### **Leadership of France**

Once Louis Philippe was ousted in 1848, Louis Napoleon renewed his quest by offering himself as a candidate for the presidency of the new French republic. To the astonishment of political veterans, he won in a landslide. His triumph was diminished, however, by a Royalist victory in the legislative elections in 1849 and by the constitution's limiting him to one four-year term. He resolved that dilemma by a coup d'état on December 2, 1851, assuming dictatorial powers and extending his term of office to ten years. Despite continued pockets of opposition, clear evidence of widespread popular support encouraged him a year later to convert the Second Republic into the Second Empire; because Napoleon I's son had been known to his followers as Napoleon II, Louis Napoleon took the title Napoleon III. Historians divide his reign



**Napoleon III**

into two periods. The dictatorship persisted until 1860. During the dictatorship, Napoleon limited the freedom of the press and the freedom of intellectual thought; he censored newspapers and exiled many writers, including Victor Hugo, banning their works. During this period, opposition began to mount and Napoleon was forced to limit his powers. After 1860, Louis Napoleon began a series of liberal reforms that culminated in a limited monarchy, the Liberal Empire, on January 2, 1870. This liberalization was marked by labor legislation, a movement toward free trade, and a revival of opposition parties. In 1868 he granted freedom of assembly and loosened restrictions on the press. Napoleon also greatly extended the French railways and tried to improve the conditions of poor people. Perhaps Napoleon III's most durable work was the reconstruction of Paris, overseen by urban planner Baron Haussmann.

His successes, however, were overshadowed by a foreign policy that was too often idealistic, blinding the emperor to real dangers to French security. From 1854 to 1856 France joined England, the Ottoman Empire, and the kingdom of Sardinia in the Crimean War fighting against Russian advancement. In 1859 France went to war again with the kingdom of Sardinia in order

*Napoleon III* continued ... ➔

to oust Austria from Italy. Although France received Nice and Savoy in 1860 because of its efforts, French intervention created other problems. The war was a costly one, and Napoleon had not foreseen the possibility that Italy would unite in 1861, creating another European power with which France must contend. In 1863 Napoleon encouraged Maximilian, the archduke of Austria, to become emperor of Mexico. Angered by French intervention, the United States demanded that the French leave. However, Maximilian did not leave and was killed by the Mexican government. The threat from Prussia, in particular, was perceived too late and caught the French unprepared in every respect when war came in 1870. Swift defeat in the field led to Napoleon's capture, and his regime was overthrown in Paris on September 4, 1870. He died in exile at Chislehurst, England.

### **Evaluation**

Evaluations of Napoleon III range from viewing him as a tyrant to praising his efforts toward democracy. He embodied strange contradictions and his reign vacillated from an authoritarian regime to an increasingly democratic one. Peasants strongly supported him and he was popularly elected. However, he crushed any adversaries. He improved France through his efforts to lessen poverty, to encourage industrialization, and to improve the infrastructure of the country. When he granted liberal reforms, he could not handle opposition. Napoleon was defeated trying to navigate between democracy and oppression.

"Napoleon III,"

*Microsoft® Encarta® 98 Encyclopedia.*

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## “Shí’ih hierarchy”

“The vast system of that hierarchy, with all its elements and appurtenances—its shaykhu’l-Isláms [high priests], its mujtahids [doctors of the law], its mullás [priests], its fuqahas [jurists] its imáms [prayer-leaders], its mu’adhdhins [criers], its vu’azz [preachers], its qádis [judges], its mutavallis [custodians], its madrasihis [seminaries], its mudarrisins [professors], its tullabs [pupils], its qurra’s [intoners], its mu’abbirins [soothsayers], its Muhaddithins [narrators], its musakhkhirins [spirit-subduers], its dhakirins [rememberers], its ‘ummal-i-dhakat [almsgivers], its muqaddasins [saints], its munzavis [recluses], its sufis, its dervishes, and what not—was paralyzed and utterly discredited. Its mujtahids, those firebrands, who wielded powers of life and death, and who for generations had been accorded honors almost regal in character, were reduced to a deplorably insignificant number.

The beturbaned prelates of the Islamic church who, in the words of Bahá’u’lláh, “decked their heads with green and white, and committed what made the Faithful Spirit to groan,” were ruthlessly swept away, except for a handful who, in order to safeguard themselves against the fury of an impious populace, are now compelled to submit to the humiliation of producing, whenever the occasion demands it, the license granted them by the civil authorities to wear this vanishing emblem of a vanished authority.

The rest of this turbaned class, whether siyyids, mullas, or hájís, were forced not only to exchange their venerable headdress for the kulah-i-farangi [European hat], which not long ago they themselves had anathematized, but also to discard their flowing robes and don the tight-fitting garments of European style, the

introduction of which into their country they had, a generation ago, so violently disapproved.”

—Shoghi Effendi, PDC, 91-92.

[Shoghi Effendi is referring to reforms introduced by Reza Shah Pahlavi that affected the Shí’ih hierarchy.]



Reza Shah Pahlavi

[Photograph from Private Collection of Dr. Troxel]

Pahlavi, Reza Shah (1877-1944), shah of Iran (1925-41), born in Savad Kouh, Mazandaran Province. Pahlavi entered the Iranian army as a youth, and in 1921 was commander of a cossack force. A large part of the country was then controlled by Soviet troops whom Pahlavi expelled. In a coup d'état he established a new government in which he was minister of war and commander in chief of the armed forces. In 1923 he became premier, and two years later, when the Majlis, or National Assembly, deposed the reigning ruler, Ahmad Shah, Pahlavi was elected in his stead. His reign was notable for the introduction

Reza Shah Pahlavi continued ... ➔

of Western customs and for his attempts to improve the transportation system and the financial structure of the country. In 1941, during World War II, when Reza Shah began to lean toward the Axis powers, Great Britain and the USSR occupied Iran and compelled him to abdicate in favor of his son, Muhammad Reza Shah Pahlavi.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>"Pahlavi, Reza Shah,"

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## “Shí’ih Islám”

Shiites (Arabic, “partisans”), the only surviving major sectarian movement in Islam.

### Origins

The Shiites emerged out of a dispute over the succession to Muhammad (see Caliphate). After the assassination of the fourth caliph, Ali, in 661, the Shiites (partisans of Ali) were those Muslims claiming that it had been Ali’s right to succeed Muhammad directly and that the previous caliphs had therefore been usurpers. They maintained that only the descendants of Ali and his wife, Fatima, Muhammad’s daughter, were entitled to rule the Muslim community. This doctrine, known as legitimism, was rejected by the majority of the Muslim community, who came to be known as Sunnites.

### Distinctive Beliefs and Practices

The Shiites developed a doctrine of the infallibility, sinlessness, and divine right to authority of the descendants of Ali, whom they called imams (see Imam). The main body of Shiites recognize 12 imams and are called the “Twelvers”; the Ismailis recognize 7 and are called the “Seveners.” The last imam disappeared in 880, and Shiites to this day await his return, when they believe that justice will be established on earth.

The imam, as the Shiites conceive him, is a repository of wisdom, absolute in his political and religious authority. Under the theoretical aegis of the 12th imam, Shiite religious leaders exercise immense influence. They are more likely to take an innovative approach to religious issues and to defy political authority than Sunnites.

During the early centuries of Islam, the Shiites, politically defeated and persecuted, became an underground movement and adopted the principles of taqwa (which in this case means “dissimulation of faith”) and of an esoteric interpretation of the Koran. Thus, Shiites believe that beneath the explicit and literal meaning of the Koran are other levels of meaning, which are known only to the imam, who can reveal them to chosen followers. These principles, useful to the movement when it was politically powerless, are still accepted by Shiites. They also affirm the validity of a form of temporary marriage called muta. Shiites pay the tax called zakat (originally

levied by Muhammad to help the poor and later levied by Muslim states) to their religious leaders rather than to state authorities, as they did before achieving political power (for instance, in Iran in the 15th century). As a result, many Shiite leaders in Iran and Iraq have immense wealth and property.

### Development and Extent

During the 10th and 11th centuries, Shia Islam had a large following throughout the Middle East, but the spread of the popular mystical movement known as Sufism seems to have greatly diminished its strength. Today Shiites are in the majority in Iran, and large numbers are found in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, India, Pakistan, and parts of Central Asia. Their total number exceeds 165 million. In recent years several Shiite leaders, including the Iranian political leader the Ayatollah Khomeini, advocated rapprochement and solidarity with Sunnite Islam.

Contributed By:  
Fazlur Rahman<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>“Shiites,”

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“I [Shoghi Effendi] shall seek to represent and correlate, in however cursory a manner, those momentous happenings which have insensibly, relentlessly, and under the very eyes of successive generations, perverse, indifferent or hostile, transformed a heterodox and seemingly negligible offshoot of the Shaykhi school of the Ithna-’Ashariyyih sect of Shi’ah Islam into a world religion [the Bahá’í Faith] ...”

—*God Passes By*, xii.

## The Qájár Dynasty 1798-1925



Fath-'Ali Shah  
1798-1834 CE



Muhammad Shah  
1835-48 CE

“...Muhammad Shah, a vulgar, false-hearted and fickle-minded schemer...”

—Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, 4.

It was during the reign of Muhammad Shah, the third of the Qajar dynasty, that the ministry of the Báb commenced in 1844. Muhammad Shah ascended the throne in 1834, and one of his early acts as Shah was to order the death of his talented Prime Minister,



Nasiri'd-Din Shah  
1848-96 A.D

“*The Prince of Oppressors*”

—Bahá'u'lláh

The Báb's was executed during the reign of Nasiri'd-Din Shah.

Bahá'u'lláh was imprisoned, exiled and died during his reign.

Mirza Abu'l-Qasim, the Qa'im Maqam. Bahá'u'lláh was later to reproach Muhammad Shah for this action as well as for his failure to bring the Báb to Tihran and meet him.  
—*The Bábí & Bahá'í Religions, 1844-1944*, 153.



Muzaffari'd-Din Shah  
1896-1907 CE



Muhammad-'Ali Shah  
1907-9 CE



Ahmad Shah  
1909-25 CE

[Photographs from private collection of Dr. Troxel].

Qajars continued ... ➡



## The Qájár Dynasty 1798-1925

In 1858, Capt. C. F. Mackenzie (q.v.) was appointed the first British Consul at Rasht. In the winter and spring of 1858-9, he undertook a journey from Rasht to Astarabad and wrote a detailed report, dated 18 July 1859, of his observations. When writing about Barfurfush, he comments on the profusion of Qájár princes in Persia, and the consequent hardships for the people whose toils were necessary to maintain these parasites in their life of luxury. According to an estimate by Asadu'llah Mírzá, himself a Qájár prince, there were some 3,700 of them alive at this time.

—*The Bábí & Bahá'í Religions, 1844-1944*, 96.

[The excerpt which follows was taken from the Introduction from *The Dawn-Breakers*.]

### A. THE QAJAR SOVEREIGNS

“In theory the king may do what he pleases; his word is law. The saying that ‘The law of the Medes and Persians altereth not’ was merely an ancient periphrasis for the absolutism of the sovereign. He appoints and he may dismiss all ministers, officers, officials, and judges. Over his own family and household, and over the civil or military functionaries in his employ, he has power of life and death without reference to any tribunal. The property of any such individual, if disgraced or executed, reverts to him. The right to take life in any case is vested in him alone, but can be delegated to governors or deputies. All property, not previously granted by the crown or purchased—all property, in fact, to which a legal title cannot be established—belongs to him, and can be disposed of at his pleasure. All rights or privileges, such as the making of public works, the working of mines, the institution of telegraphs, roads, railroads, tramways, etc., the exploitation, in fact, of any of the resources of the country, are vested in him, and must be purchased from him before they can be assumed by others. In his person are fused the threefold functions of government, legislative,

executive, and judicial. No obligation is imposed upon him beyond the outward observance of the forms of the national religion. He is the pivot upon which turns the entire machinery of public life.

“Such is, in theory, and was till lately in practice, the character of the Persian monarchy. Nor has a single one of these high pretensions been overtly conceded. The language in which the Shah addresses his subjects and is addressed by them, recalls the proud tone in which an Artaxerxes or Darius spoke to his tributary millions, and which may still be read in the graven record of rock-wall and tomb. He remains the Shahinshah, or King of Kings; the Zillu'llah, or Shadow of God; the Qibliy-i-'Alam, or Centre of the Universe; ‘Exalted like the planet Saturn; Well of Science; Footpath of Heaven; Sublime Sovereign, whose standard is the Sun, whose splendour is that of the Firmament; Monarch of armies numerous as the stars.’ Still would the Persian subject endorse the precept of Sa'di, that ‘The vice approved by the king becomes a virtue; to seek opposite counsel is to imbrue one's hands in his own blood.’ The march of time has imposed upon him neither religious council nor secular council, neither ‘ulama nor senate. Elective and representative institutions have not yet intruded their irreverent features. No written check exists upon the royal prerogative.

“. . . Such is the divinity that doth hedge a throne in a Persia, that not merely does the Shah never attend at state dinners or eat with his subjects at table, with the exception of a single banquet to his principal male relatives at Naw-ruz, but the attitude and language employed toward him even by his confidential ministers are those of servile obeisance and adulation. ‘May I be your sacrifice, Asylum of the Universe,’ is the common mode of address adopted even by subjects of the highest rank. In his own surrounding there is no one to tell him the truth or to give him dispassionate counsel. The foreign Ministers are probably almost the only

*Qajars* continued ... ➡

source from which he learns facts as they are, or receives unvarnished, even if interested, advice. With the best intentions in the world for the undertaking of great plans and for the amelioration of his country, he has little or no control over the execution of an enterprise which has once passed out of his hands and has become the sport of corrupt and self-seeking officials. Half the money voted with his consent never reaches its destination, but sticks to every intervening pocket with which a professional ingenuity can bring it into transient contact; half the schemes authorised by him are never brought any nearer to realisation, the minister or functionary in charge trusting to the oblivious caprices of the sovereign to overlook his dereliction of duty.

“ . . . Only a century ago the abominable system prevailed of blinding possible aspirants to the throne, of savage mutilations and life-long captivities, of wanton slaughter and systematic bloodshed. Disgrace was not less sudden than promotion, and death was a frequent concomitant of disgrace.

“ . . . Fath-'Ali Shah . . . and his successors after him, have proved so extraordinarily prolific of male offspring that the continuity of the dynasty has been assured; and there is probably not a reigning family in the world that in the space of one hundred years has swollen to such ample dimensions as the royal race of Persia.... Neither in the number of his wives nor in the extent of his progeny, can the Shah, although undeniably a family man, be compared with his great-grandfather, Fath-'Ali Shah. To the high opinion universally held of the domestic capacities of that monarch must, I imagine, be attributed the divergent estimates that are to be found, in works about Persia, of the number of his concubines and children. Colonel Drouville, in 1813, credits him with 700 wives, 64 sons, and 125 daughters. Colonel Stuart, who was in Persia in the year after Fath-'Ali's death, gives him 1,000 wives and 105 children.... Madame Dieulafoy also names the 5,000 descendants, but as existing at an epoch fifty years later (which has an air of greater probabil-

ity).... The estimate which appears in the Nasikhu't Tavarikh, a great modern Persian historical work, fixes the number of Fath-'Ali's wives as over 1,000, and of his offspring as 260, 110 of whom survived their father. Hence the familiar Persian proverb 'Camels, fleas, and princes exist everywhere.' . . . No royal family has ever afforded a more exemplary illustration of the Scriptural assurance, 'Instead of thy fathers thou shalt have children, whom thou mayest make princes in all lands'; for there was scarcely a governorship or a post of emolument in Persia that was not filled by one of this beehive of princelings; and to this day the myriad brood of Shah-zadihs, or descendants of a king, is a perfect curse to the country, although many of these luckless scions of royalty, who consume a large portion of the revenue in annual allowances and pensions, now occupy very inferior positions as telegraph clerks, secretaries, etc. Fraser drew a vivid picture of the misery entailed upon the country fifty years ago (1842) by this 'race of royal drones,' who filled the governing posts not merely of every province, but of every buluk or district, city, and town; each of whom kept up a court, and a huge harem, and who preyed upon the country like a swarm of locusts.... Fraser, passing through Adharbayjan in 1834, and observing the calamitous results of the system under which Fath-'Ali Shah distributed his colossal male progeny in every Government post throughout the kingdom, remarked: 'The most obvious consequence of this state of affairs is a thorough and universal detestation of the Qajar race, which is a prevalent feeling in every heart and the theme of every tongue.'

“ . . . Just as, in the course of his [Nasiri'd-Din Shah's] European travels, he picked up a vast number of what appeared, to the Eastern mind, to be wonderful curiosities, but which have since been stacked in the various apartments of the palace, or put away and forgotten; so in the larger sphere of public policy and administration he is continually taking up and pushing some new

scheme or invention which, when the caprice has been gratified, is neglected or allowed to expire. One week it is gas; another it is electric lights. Now it is a staff college; anon, a military hospital. To-day it is a Russian uniform; yesterday it was a German man-of-war for the Persian Gulf. A new army warrant is issued this year; a new code of law is promised for the next. Nothing comes of any of these brilliant schemes, and the lumber-rooms of the palace are not more full of broken mechanism and discarded bric-a-brac than are the pigeon-holes of the government bureaux of abortive reforms and dead fiascoes.

“ . . . In an upper chamber of the same pavilion, Mirza Abu'l-Qasim, the Qa'im-Maqam, or Grand Vazir, of Muhammad Shah (the father of the present monarch), was strangled in 1835, by order of his royal master, who therein followed an example set him by his predecessor, and set one himself that was duly followed by his son. It must be rare in history to find three successive sovereigns who have put to death, from jealous motives only, the three ministers who have either raised them to the throne or were at the time of their fall filling the highest office in the State. Such is the triple distinction of Fath-'Ali, Muhammad, and Nasiri'd-Din Shahs.”

—Nathaniel Curzon in *Persia and the Persian Question*, quoted in the introduction to *The Dawn-Breakers*, xxxvi-xl.

**Reza Shah Pahlavi** was the first shah after the Qajar Dynasty ended.

“His [Bahá’u’lláh’s] incarceration in **Mázindarán**”

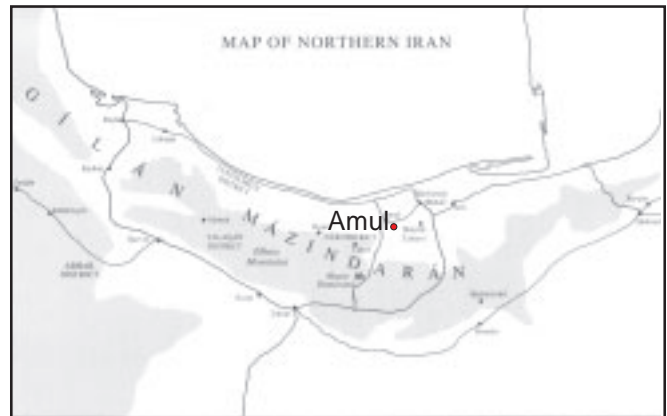
O Sháykh! That which hath touched this Wronged One is beyond compare or equal. We have borne it all with the utmost willingness and resignation, so that the souls of men may be edified, and the Word of God be exalted. While confined in the prison of the Land of Mím (Mazindaran) We were one day delivered into the hands of the divines. Thou canst well imagine what befell Us.”

—Bahá’u’lláh, *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, 76-77.

“...He [Bahá’u’lláh] suffered His second imprisonment, this time in the masjid of Amul to which He was led, amidst the tumult raised by no less than four thousand spectators,—for their sake that He was bastinadoed in the namaz-khanih of the mujtahid of that town until His feet bled, and later confined in the private residence of its governor;

for their sake that He was bitterly denounced by the leading mulla, and insulted by the mob who, besieging the governor's residence, pelted Him with stones, and hurled in His face the foulest invectives.”

—Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, 68-69.

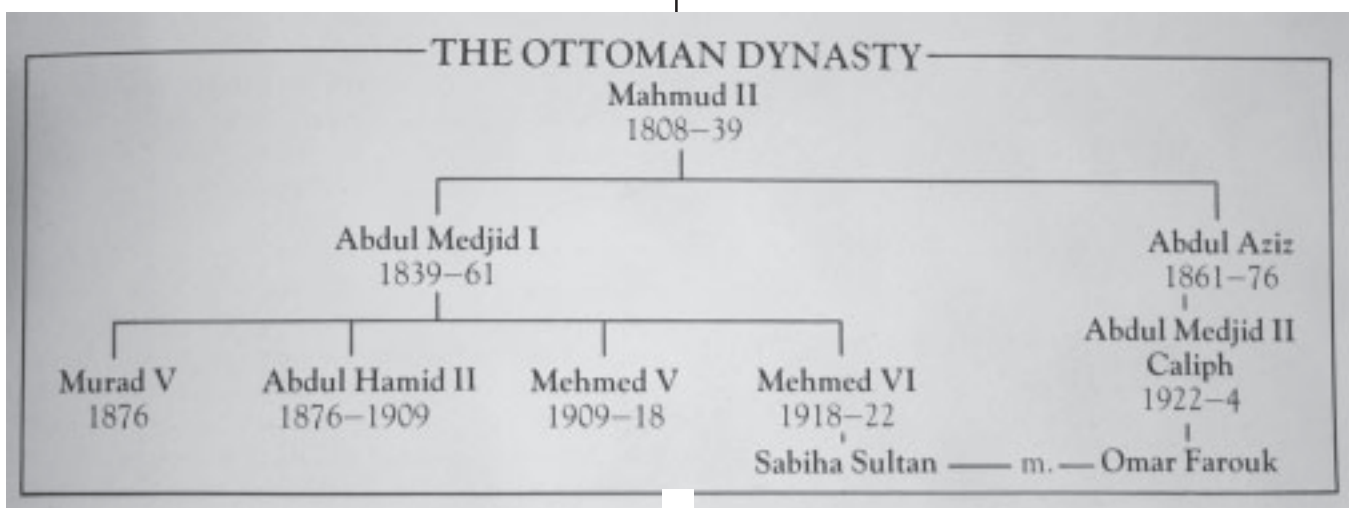


“The overthrow of the **Sultánate**”

“The sultanate was abolished on November 1, 1922, and the republic proclaimed on October 29, 1923, with **Ataturk** as president.”



This map shows the extent of the Sultan’s domains at the beginning of the 19th century. After WWI the Empire was broken up.



The chart above lists the Ottoman Sultans from 1808 until 1922.

*Sultanate* continued ... ➡

Sultanate -

Sultán - The title of a Muslim ruler over a secular sphere. The rulers of the Ottoman and Mughal Empires were titled “Sultán”. “The duties of the Sultán are to uphold and implement the Shar’iah [refers to God’s law]. Oman remains one of the last Islamic states governed by a sultan.”

—*A Concise Encyclopedia of Islam* by Gordon D. Newby, 197.

**“sultanate n. a country subject to a sultan; the period of rule of a sultan or sultans; the position or office of sultan.”**

—*New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*

“Sultan, traditional title used by monarchs in Islamic countries. Derived from the Arabic word for “authority,” it was first used as a personal title by Mahmud of Ghazni, a Turkic chieftain who early in the 11th century founded an empire in what is now Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. The title was adopted thereafter by many other Muslim sovereigns, including the rulers of the Seljuk and Ottoman empires.”

—Microsoft Encarta 98 Encyclopedia



**Ataturk, Mustafa Kemal** (1881-1938), **Turkish soldier**, nationalist leader, and statesman, **who founded the republic of Turkey and was its first president (1923-1938)**. The name Ataturk (Father Turk) was bestowed upon him in 1934 by the Grand National Assembly as a tribute for his unique service to the Turkish nation. Ataturk was born in Salonika (now Thessaloníki, Greece), the son of a minor official who became a timber merchant. When Ataturk was 12 years old, he went to military schools in Salonika and Monastir, centers of anti-Turkish Greek and Slavic nationalism. In 1899 he attended the military academy in Istanbul, graduating as staff captain in January 1905.

A Greek army occupied Izmir on the Anatolian coast on May 15, 1919. Atatürk, who had been appointed inspector of the Third Army in Anatolia, reached Samsun on May 19. He immediately set about uniting the Turkish national movement and creating an army for defense. First, however, the nationalists had to wage a struggle against the Ottoman sultan's regime in Istanbul, which seemed willing to allow the dismemberment of the national territory. By 1920 the Istanbul government had been discredited for acquiescing to the Allied occupation of the capital and signing the Treaty of Sèvres, which recognized Greek control over parts of Anatolia. Ataturk, meanwhile, had set up a provisional government in Ankara in April 1920. After initial setbacks, he won decisive battles against Greek forces at Sakarya



(August 1921) and Dumlupinar (August 1922), reoccupying Izmir in September.

### **National Leader**

Having dealt with the external threat, Ataturk turned to the internal one posed by the conservative forces around the sultan. **The sultanate was abolished on November 1, 1922, and the republic proclaimed on October 29, 1923, with Ataturk as president.** He founded the People's Party (renamed Republican People's Party in 1924) in August 1923 and established a single-party regime that, except for two brief experiments (1924-1925 and 1930) with opposition parties, lasted until 1945.

## “The overthrow of the ... Caliphate”

Upon the death of Muhammad—’Ali—the son-in-law of Muhammad—should have rightfully been accorded the leadership of Islam. This did not happen. Another *Khalifa* (successor)—Caliph—was chosen instead. The first Caliph was Muhammad’s father-in-law—’Abu Bakr. ’Alí was finally chosen to lead Islam as its fourth Caliph. The Shi’ah’s (partisans of ’Alí), and Bahá’ís do not recognize the legitimacy of the Caliphate. Shoghi Effendi said”

“Thirteen hundred years had to elapse from the death of the Prophet Muhammad ere the illegitimacy of the institution of the Caliphate, the founders of which had usurped the authority of the lawful successors [Imams] of the Apostle of God, would be fully and publicly demonstrated. An institution which in its inception had trampled upon so sacred a right and unchained the forces of so distressful a schism, an institution which, in the latter days, had dealt so grievous a blow to a Faith Whose Forerunner was Himself a descendant of the very Imams whose authority that institution had repudiated, deserved full well the chastisement that had sealed its fate.”

—*World Order of Bahá’u’lláh*, 178.

1665. Clarification of Certain Issues Regarding Islam, The Imam Husayn the Imamate, Etc.

“’Ali’s appointment was clear to the Khalifs, who actually disregarded the Prophet’s oral statements.

“The usurpation occurred immediately after the Prophet’s death.

“’Ali did not feel unqualified, but wished to avoid schism, which, unfortunately, could not be prevented.

“The schisms that have afflicted the religions preceding the Faith of Baha’u’llah establish its distinction from all previous Revelations, and single it out among all other Dispensations, as stated by ’Abdu’l-Bahá.

“The guidance vouchsafed to the Imams regarding the laws and institutions of Islam was absolute and unqualified. Their infallibility was derived



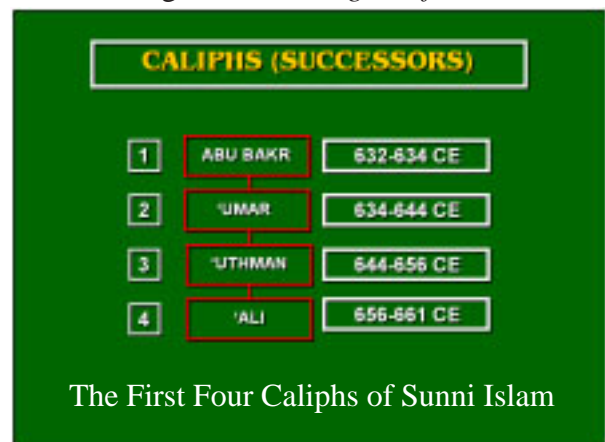
‘Abdu’l-Mejid II (1922-1924)  
Last Caliph of the Ottoman Empire

directly from the Manifestation.

“The Báb’s descent from the Imam Husayn is no doubt a proof of the validity of the Imamate. According to Nabil the dream the Báb had made him first conscious of His Revelation.

“The precedence of the name Husayn over ’Ali does establish the greatness of Imam Husayn.

—Shoghi Effendi, *Lights of Guidance*, 496.





“the Sultán of Turkey,  
the arch-enemy of His Cause”

‘ABDU’L-AZÍZ was the Sultán of the Ottoman Turkish Empire (ruled 1861-1876) who banished Bahá’u’lláh from Constantinople (Istanbul) to Adrianople (Edirene) in 1863, and finally to ‘Akká in 1868. The Sultán’s decree condemned Bahá’u’lláh and His companions to permanent banishment and ordered that they be strictly confined and forbidden to associate with each other or with the local inhabitants. Bahá’u’lláh is reported to have said that in banishing Him without reason to the Most Great Prison (‘Akká), ‘Abdu’l-’Azíz’s tyranny was worse than Násir’ d-Dín Sháh’s. Bahá’u’lláh addressed the Sultán in two Tablets including the *Súriy-i-Mulúk* (Tablet to the Kings), but he did not respond. ‘Abdu’l-’Azíz was deposed and assassinated in 1876.”

—A *Basic Bahá’í Dictionary*, 2.



Sultán ‘Abdu’l-Azíz (1861-1876)

“Nor was the then representative of the British government, Colonel Sir Arnold Burrows Kemball, consul-general in Baghdad, insensible of the position which Bahá’u’lláh now occupied. Entering into friendly correspondence with Him, he, as testified by Bahá’u’lláh Himself, offered Him the protection of British citizenship, called on Him in person, and undertook to transmit to Queen Victoria any communication He might wish to forward to her. He even expressed his readiness to arrange for transfer of His residence to India, or to any place agreeable to Him. This suggestion Bahá’u’lláh declined, choosing to abide in the dominions of the Sultán of Turkey [‘Abdu’l-Azíz].”

—Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, 131.





#### 'ABDU'L-HAMÍD II

“Sultán of the Ottoman Turkish Empire (ruled 1876-1909). As a result of the plotting of Mírzá Muhammad-'Alí, in 1901 'Abdu'l-Hamíd restricted 'Abdu'l-Bahá's freedom, confining Him and His family within the city walls of 'Akká. Later the Sultán sent two commissions of inquiry to investigate false charges made against 'Abdu'l-Bahá by Covenant-breakers, and for a time 'Abdu'l-Bahá was in great danger. However, with the Young Turk's revolution in 1908, all religious and political prisoners in the Ottoman Empire were freed and the Sultán was overthrown the following year. He died in 1918.”

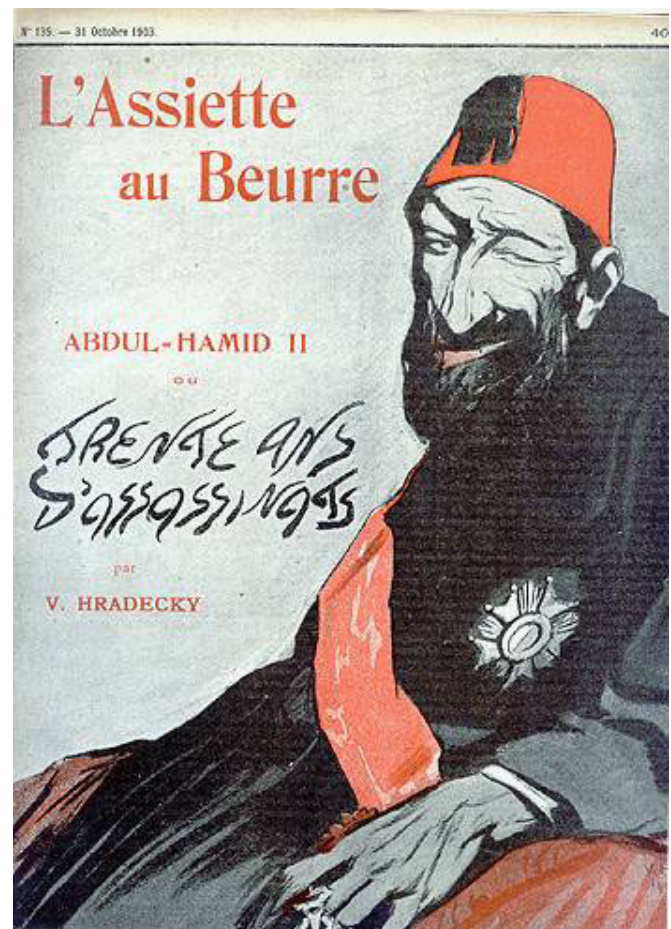
—*A Basic Bahá'í Dictionary*, 4.

“'Abdu'l-Hamid II (b. Sept. 21, 1842, Constantinople—d. Feb. 10, 1918, Constantinople), Ottoman sultan from 1876 to 1909, under whose autocratic rule the reform movement of Tanzimat (Reorganization) reached its climax and who adopted a policy of pan-Islamism in opposition to Western intervention in Ottoman affairs.

A son of Sultan Abdu'l Majid I, he came to the throne at the deposition of his mentally deranged brother, Murad V, on Aug. 31, 1876. He promulgated the first Ottoman constitution on Dec. 23, 1876, primarily to ward off foreign intervention at a time when the Turks' savage suppression of the Bulgarian uprising (May 1876) and Ottoman successes in Serbia and Montenegro had aroused the

indignation of Western powers and Russia. After a disastrous war with Russia (1877), Abdu'l Hamid was convinced that little help could be expected from the Western powers without their intrusion into Ottoman affairs. He dismissed the Parliament, which had met in March 1877, and suspended the constitution in February 1878. Thenceforth for 40 years he ruled from his seclusion at Yildiz Palace (in Constantinople), assisted by a system of secret police, an expanded telegraph network, and severe censorship.”

—*Encyclopedia Britannica* 1994-1999



the **Russo-Turkish** war

### **The War of 1877-1878**

In 1875 and 1876 a general uprising of Balkan peoples against the Ottoman Turkish empire aroused widespread sympathy in Russia. Czar Alexander II at first resisted involvement, fearing unfavorable European reaction, but he declared war on Turkey in January 1877 after diplomatic efforts to end the crisis failed. The campaign in the Caucasus advanced smoothly and that in the Balkans proved unexpectedly bloody and difficult, but by January 1878 Russian forces were advancing on Constantinople. The Treaty of San Stefano (1878) granted Russia considerable territory in the Caucasus, Dobruja (or Dobrogea), and the Danube delta; decreed the independence of Romania, Serbia, and Montenegro; and established a large autonomous Bulgarian principality. Britain and Austria-Hungary were opposed to this expansion of Russian influence, and a congress of the European powers meeting in Berlin in June 1878 revised the San Stefano agreement, primarily by reducing the Bulgarian principality and by limiting the Russian role there.

Russia fought no more wars with Turkey until 1914, presumably sensing that it was too weak to gain control of the straits in the face of European opposition. In World War I it won the approval of Britain and France for the ultimate annexation of Constantinople and the straits after the war, but military defeat and revolution rendered these hopes vain.

"Russo-Turkish Wars,"

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Czar Alexander II of Russia

“the **Turkish Revolution of 1909** that precipitated the downfall of ‘**Abdu’l-Hamíd**”

Young Turks, Turkish JÖNTÜRKLER, coalition of various reform groups that led a revolutionary movement against the authoritarian regime of Ottoman sultan Abdülhamid [‘Abdu’l-Hamíd] II, which culminated in the establishment of a constitutional government. After their rise to power, the Young Turks introduced programs that promoted the modernization of the Ottoman Empire and a new spirit of Turkish nationalism. Their handling of foreign affairs, however, resulted in the dissolution of the Ottoman state.

In 1889 a group of students in the Imperial Medical Academy in Istanbul initiated a conspiracy against Abdülhamid that spread rapidly to other colleges in the city. When the plot was uncovered, many of its leaders fled abroad, mainly to Paris, where they prepared the groundwork for a future revolution against Abdülhamid [‘Abdu’l-Hamíd]. Among the most notable of the liberal émigrés was Ahmed Riza, who became a key spokesman for the influential Young Turk organization known as the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), which advocated a program of orderly reform under a strong central government and the exclusion of all foreign influence. A major rival faction was formed by Prince Sabaheddin. His group, called the League of Private Initiative and Decentralization, espoused many of the same liberal principles as those propounded by the CUP, but, unlike the latter, it favoured administrative decentralization and European assistance to implement reforms.

Although the CUP and the League played a significant role in disseminating and stimulating liberal thought, the actual impetus for the Young Turk Revolution of 1908 came from groups within the empire, particularly from discontented members of the 3rd Army Corps in Macedonia. Many young officers of the corps garrisoned at Salonika (now Thessaloníka, Greece) organized to

form the Ottoman Liberty Society in 1906. This secret revolutionary group merged with the CUP in Paris the following year, bringing to the Young Turk ideologists the command of the 3rd Army Corps. Later in 1907 the CUP and the League of Private Initiative and Decentralization agreed, though reluctantly, to work together to achieve their common goal.

On July 3, 1908, Maj. Ahmed Niyazi of the 3rd Corps led a revolt against the provincial authorities in Resna. Other conspirators soon followed his example, and the rebellion rapidly spread throughout the empire. Unable to rely on government troops, Abdülhamid [‘Abdu’l-Hamíd] announced on July 23 the restoration of the 1876 constitution and recalled parliament. The Young Turks had succeeded in establishing a constitutional government, but their deep-seated ideological differences resurfaced and prevented them from taking effective control of that government until 1913, when the CUP under new leaders—the triumvirate of Talât Pasa, Ahmed Cemal Pasa, and Enver Pasa—set itself up as the real arbiter of Ottoman politics

While in power, the Young Turks carried out administrative reforms, especially of provincial administration, that led to more centralization. They were also the first Ottoman reformers to promote industrialization. In addition, the programs of the Young Turk regime effectuated greater secularization of the legal system and provided for the education of women and better state-operated primary schools. Such positive developments in domestic affairs, however, were largely overshadowed by the disastrous consequences of the regime’s foreign policy decisions. An overly hasty appraisal of Germany’s military capability by the Young Turk leaders led them to break neutrality and enter World War I (1914-18) on the side of the Central Powers. Upon the end of the war, with defeat imminent, the CUP Cabinet resigned on Oct. 9, 1918, less than a month before the Ottomans signed the Armistice of Mudros.

## “liberation of Palestine”

On December 9th 1917, General Allenby entered Jerusalem.

It now seemed certain that the days of the Ottoman rule in the Holy Land were numbered. But the life of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was still in danger. Let those who helped to

avert that danger speak. First, Lady Blomfield:

In the spring of 1918, I was much startled and deeply disturbed by a telephone message: ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in serious danger. Take immediate action.’ It came from an authoritative source. There was not a moment to be lost

Every available power must be brought to bear to save the Master.

I went at once to Lord Lamington. His sympathetic regard for ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, his understanding of the ramifications and ‘red tape’ necessary for ‘immediate action’ were of priceless value.

A letter was immediately written to the Foreign Office explaining the importance of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s position, His work for true peace, and for the spiritual welfare of many thousands of people. Through the influence of Lord Lamington, and his prompt help, the letter, with alarming news, was at once put into the hands of Lord Balfour.

That very evening a cable was sent to General Allenby with these instructions, ‘Extend every protection and consideration to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, His family and His friends, when the British march on Haifa.’

So a terrible tragedy was averted, by the promptness and understanding of Lord Lamington and the power of Lord Balfour, his colleagues in the Cabinet here in London and by the devotion, efficiency, and promptitude of Major Tudor-Pole at the Turkish end, for Haifa was still in the hands of the Turks.

The Turks had been so aroused by the enemies of the Master that they [Jamal Pasha] had threatened to crucify Him, and all His family, on Mount Carmel.

When General Allenby took Haifa, several days before it was believed possible for him to do so, he sent a cablegram to London which caused everybody to wonder, and especially filled the hearts of the Bahá’ís in all the world with deep gratitude to the Almighty Protector.

The cable of General Allenby was as follows: ‘Have today taken Palestine. Notify the world that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá is safe.’

—H.M. Balyuzi, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, 245-246.



Wellesly Tudor-Pole



General Allenby



Photograph from C. W. Stiles  
GENERAL VON FALKENHAYN AND DJEMAL PASHA LEAVING THE MOSQUE OF OMAR  
IN JERUSALEM

Jemal Pasha

“the downfall of the **House of ‘Uthmán**”

Within a few months, in 1909, the Young Turks obtained from the Shaykhu'l-Islam the condemnation of the Sultan himself who, as a result of further attempts to overthrow the constitution, was finally and ignominiously deposed, deported and made a prisoner of state. On one single day of that same year there were executed no less than thirty-one leading ministers, pashas and officials, among whom were numbered notorious enemies of the [Bahá'í] Faith. Tripolitania itself, the scene of `Abdu'l-Bahá's intended exile was subsequently wrested from the Turks by Italy. Thus ended the reign of the "Great Assassin," [**'Abdu'l-Hamíd II**] "the most mean, cunning, untrustworthy and cruel intriguer of the long dynasty of 'Uthman," a reign "more disastrous in its immediate losses of territory and in the certainly of others to follow, and more conspicuous for the deterioration of the condition of his subjects, than that of any other of his twenty-three degenerate predecessors since the death of Sulayman the Magnificent."

—Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, 273.  
Underline and italics emphasis added.

“... the subtle, the resourceful, the suspicious, the tyrannical 'Abdu'l-Hamid II who "proved to be the most mean, cunning, untrustworthy and cruel intriguer of the long dynasty of 'Uthman." "No one knew," it was written of him, "from day to day who was the person on whose advice the sultan overruled his ostensible ministers, whether a favorite lady of his harem, or a eunuch, or some fanatical dervish, or an astrologer, or a spy." The Bulgarian atrocities heralded the black reign of this "Great Assassin," which thrilled Europe with horror, and were characterized by Gladstone as "the basest and blackest outrages upon record in that [XIX] century."

—Shoghi Effendi, *The Promised Day is Come*, 63.



## “the annulment of the **Shari’ah Law**”

Shoghi Effendi is referring to **Kemal Ataturk’s** curtailment of the Islamic legal system in Turkey and its replacement with secular law.

—Ed.

Accelerated, twenty years later [after 1848], by another trumpet-blast, announcing the formulation of the laws of yet another Dispensation [Bahá’u’lláh’s], this process of disintegration, associated with the declining fortunes of a superannuated, though divinely revealed Law, gathered further momentum, precipitated, in a later age, the annulment of the Shari’ah canonical Law in Turkey, led to the virtual abandonment of that Law in Shi`ah Persia, has, more recently, been responsible for the dissociation of the System envisaged in the Kitab-i-Aqdas from the Sunni ecclesiastical Law in Egypt, has paved the way for the recognition of that System in the Holy Land itself, and is destined to culminate in the secularization of the Muslim states, and in the universal recognition of the Law of Baha'u'llah by all the nations, and its enthronement in the hearts of all the peoples, of the Muslim world.

—Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, 34.

“Shariah literally means “the right path” or “guide,” whereas fiqh refers to human understanding and knowledge. The divine Shariah thus indicates the path to righteousness; reason discovers the Shariah and relates its general directives to the quest for finding solutions of particular or unprecedented issues. ...it is an integral part of the dogma of Islam.”

—*The Oxford History of Islam*, 108.

Ataturk, Mustafa Kemal (1298-9/1881-1357/1938) The founder of the modern state of Turkey in 1342/1923 and first President of that secularized Republic. His name Ataturk means 'Father of the Turks'. The secularization of Turkey meant the abolition of the sultanate and the caliphate, as well as the Sufi (q.v.) orders, Qur'an schools and *Shari'a* (q.v.) courts. It was no longer stated in the Constitution that Islam was the state religion. Ataturk blamed Islam for the long decline of the Ottomans (q.v.) and their empire.

—Ian Richard Netton, *Dictionary of Islam*, 43. Underline and italics added.



“Roman Emperor, in the second half of the first century of the Christian Era”

The Jews revolted against increasingly oppressive Roman rule in AD 66, and they managed to hold on to Jerusalem in the face of siege until AD 70. In that year, the city was captured by Titus, son of the Roman emperor Vespasian, who destroyed the Temple, except for the Western Wall. The city suffered almost complete destruction during the rebellion (132-135) led by Simon Bar Kokhba, following which the Jews were banished from the city. Under the Roman emperor Hadrian, the city was rebuilt as a pagan city, and its name was changed to Aelia Capitolina.

"Jerusalem,"

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“desecrated and robbed the Holy of Holies of its treasures, and transported them to Rome”

Tabernacle, in the Old Testament, tent established by Moses in which the Ark of the Covenant was conveyed (see Exodus 25-31, 35-40). It was held to represent the presence of God. It seems (see 1 Samuel 3:3) to have been superseded by a more permanent building at Shiloh (near Jerusalem) before the time of David, king of Judah and Israel. The Tabernacle was roughly equivalent to the sacred enclosures of the Temple, called the holy place and the *holy of holies*. In the Roman Catholic church the receptacle in which the consecrated elements of the Eucharist are retained is called the tabernacle.

"Tabernacle,"

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Emphasis added.

“reared a pagan colony on the mount of Zion”

The Jews revolted against increasingly oppressive Roman rule in AD 66, and they managed to hold on to Jerusalem in the face of siege until AD 70. In that year, the city was captured by Titus, son of the Roman emperor Vespasian, who destroyed the Temple, except for the Western Wall. The city suffered almost complete destruction during the rebellion (132-135) led by Simon Bar Kokhba, following which the Jews were banished from the city. Under the Roman emperor Hadrian, the city was rebuilt as a *pagan city*, and its name was changed to Aelia Capitolina.

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Emphasis added.

“mount of Zion”

Refers to the temple mount situated in the old part of the city of Jerusalem.

—Ed.

“Constantinople”

Constantine the Great (about AD 274-337), Roman emperor (306-37), the first Roman ruler to be converted to Christianity. He was the founder of Constantinople (present-day Istanbul), which remained the capital of the Eastern Roman (Byzantine) Empire until 1453.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>"Constantine the Great,"

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## massacred the Jews

Masada (Hebrew, “fortress”), ancient ruins on a mountaintop in the desert about 48.3 km (about 30 mi) southeast of Jerusalem, the scene of the last stand made by the Jewish Zealots in their revolt against Roman rule (AD 66-73). Two fortified palaces were built there in the 1st century BC by the Judean king Herod the Great. After Herod’s death, Masada was occupied by a Roman garrison until the Zealots captured it in AD 66. When Jerusalem was taken by the Romans in 70, the last remaining rebels—about 1000 men, women, and children—withdrew to the remote mountaintop. Under their leader, Eleazar ben Jair, they withstood a 2-year siege by the Roman Tenth Legion. All but seven killed themselves rather than surrender when the besiegers finally captured the fortress in 73. Excavated by the Israeli archaeologist Yigael Yadin in 1963-65, Masada is both a popular tourist attraction and an Israeli national shrine.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>“Masada,”

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## “the Lawh-i-Ra’is”

“The Suriy-i-Ra’is, which addresses ‘Ali Pasha, the Ottoman Prime Minister, was revealed in August 1868 as the exiles were being moved from Adrianople to Gallipoli, and exposes unsparingly the abuse of civil power the minister had perpetrated. The Lawh-i-Ra’is, which also contains passages directed to ‘Ali Pasha, was revealed shortly after Baha’u’llah’s incarceration in the citadel of ‘Akka [1868] and includes a chilling denunciation of the character of the Minister.”

—From introduction to  
*The Summons of the Lord of Hosts.*  
LAWH-I-RA’IS

HE IS IN HIS OWN RIGHT THE SUPREME RULER!

1 The Pen of the Most High proclaimeth: O thou who hast imagined thyself to be the most exalted of men[55] and who hast regarded as the lowliest of all creatures this divine Youth, through Whom the eyes of the Concourse on high have been illumined and made radiant! This Youth hath sought nothing from thee or from such as are like unto thee, inasmuch as from time immemorial, whenever the Manifestations of the All-Merciful and the Exponents of His unfading glory have stepped out of the Realm of eternity into this mortal world and revealed themselves to revive the dead, men such as thee have considered these sanctified Souls and Temples of Divine Oneness, upon Whom must needs depend the rehabilitation of the peoples of the earth, to be stirrers of mischief and worthy of blame. These men, verily, have all returned unto dust. Thou, too, shalt ere long take abode therein and find thyself in grievous loss.

[55. This second Tablet of Baha’u’llah addressing ‘Ali Pasha was revealed in Persian shortly after Baha’u’llah’s arrival and confinement in ‘Akka.]

2 Even if this Lifegiver and World Reformer be in thine estimation guilty of sedition and strife, what crime could have been committed by a group of women, children, and suckling mothers that they should be thus afflicted with the scourge of thine anger and wrath? No faith or religion hath ever held children responsible. The Pen of divine Command hath exempted them, yet the fire of thy tyranny and oppression encompasseth all. If thou bearest allegiance to any faith or religion, then thou shouldst know that, according to all the heavenly Books and all the divinely inspired and weighty Scriptures, children are not to be held accountable. Aside from this, not even those who disbelieve in God have perpetrated such unseemly acts. Since from every thing an effect



*‘Ali Pasha, grand vizier of Sultan ‘Abdu’-‘Aziz.  
It was to him that the Suriy-i-Ra’is was  
addressed.*

becometh manifest, a fact that none can deny save those who are bereft of reason and understanding, it is certain that the sighs of these children and the cries of these wronged ones will have their due consequence.

3 Ye have plundered and unjustly despoiled a group of people who have never rebelled in your domains, nor disobeyed your government, but rather kept to themselves and engaged day and night in the remembrance of God. Later, when the order was issued to banish this Youth, all were filled with dismay. The officials in charge of My expulsion declared, however: “These others have not been charged with any offence and have not been expelled by the government. Should they desire to accompany you, no one will oppose them.” These hapless souls therefore paid their own expenses, forsook all their possessions, and, contenting themselves with Our presence and placing their whole trust in God, journeyed once again with Him until the fortress of ‘Akka became the prison of Baha.

4 Upon our arrival, we were surrounded by guards and confined together, men and women, young and old alike, in the army barracks. The first night all were deprived of either food or drink, for the sentries were

*The Lawh-i-Ra’is continued ... ➡*

guarding the gate of the barracks and permitted no one to leave. No one gave a thought to the plight of these wronged ones. They even begged for water, and were refused.

**5** Time hath passed, and we all remain confined in these barracks, notwithstanding that during the five years we dwelt in Adrianople, all its inhabitants, whether learned or ignorant, rich or poor, bore witness to the purity and sanctity of these servants. At the time this Youth was departing from Adrianople, one of the loved ones of God attempted to take his own life, so unbearable to him was the sight of this Wronged One in the hands of His oppressors. During the journey we were thrice compelled to change ships, and it is evident how much the children suffered as a result. Upon disembarking, four of the believers were separated and prevented from accompanying Us. As this Youth was leaving, one of the four, named 'Abdu'l-Ghaffar, cast himself into the sea, and no one knoweth what befell him thereafter.[56]  
[56. For an account of this incident see God Passes By, p. 182.]

**6** All this is but a drop in the ocean of the wrongs that have been inflicted upon Us, and still ye are not satisfied! The officials enforce every day a new decree, and no end is in sight to their tyranny. Night and day they conceive new schemes. They have assigned each prisoner, from the government storehouse, a daily allowance of three loaves of bread that no one can eat. From the foundation of the world until the present day a cruelty such as this hath neither been seen nor heard of.

**7** By the righteousness of Him Who hath caused Baha to speak forth before all that are in heaven and all that are on earth! Ye have neither rank nor mention among them that have offered up their souls, their bodies and their substance for the love of God, the All-Powerful, the All-Compelling, the Almighty. A handful of clay is greater in the sight of God than all your dominion and your sovereignty, and all your might and your fortune. Should it be His wish, He would scatter you in dust. Soon will He seize you in His wrathful anger, sedition will be stirred up in your midst, and your dominions will be disrupted. Then will ye wail and lament, and will find none to help or succour you.

**8** In making mention of these matters, it is not Our purpose to rouse you from your slumber, since the fury of God's wrath hath so encompassed you that ye shall never take heed. Nor is it Our intention to recount the iniquities visited upon these pure and blessed souls, for they have been so intoxicated with the wine of the All-Merciful and are so carried away

with the inebriating effect of the living waters of His loving providence that even were they to suffer all the cruelties of the world for His sake, they would remain content and yield thanks unto Him. These souls have never held, nor shall they ever hold any grievance. Nay, their blood continually imploreth and beseecheth the Lord of the worlds that it might be spilt upon the dust in His path, and their heads yearn to be borne aloft on spears for the sake of the Beloved of hearts and souls.

**9** Several times calamities have overtaken you, and yet ye failed utterly to take heed. One of them was the conflagration which devoured most of the City[57] with the flames of justice, and concerning which many poems were written, stating that no such fire had ever been witnessed. And yet, ye waxed more heedless. Plague, likewise, broke out, and ye still failed to give heed! Be expectant, however, for the wrath of God is ready to overtake you. Ere long will ye behold that which hath been sent down from the Pen of My command.

[57. A probable reference to the fire of Hicapasa, which destroyed a large part of the city of Constantinople in 1865.]

**10** Have ye fondly imagined your glory to be imperishable and your dominion to be everlasting? Nay, by Him Who is the All-Merciful! Neither will your glory last, nor will Mine abasement endure. Such abasement, in the estimation of a true man, is the pride of every glory.

**11** When I was still a child and had not yet attained the age of maturity, My father made arrangements in Tihiran for the marriage of one of My older brothers, and as is customary in that city, the festivities lasted for seven days and seven nights. On the last day it was announced that the play "Shah Sultan Salim" would be presented. A large number of princes, dignitaries, and notables of the capital gathered for the occasion. I was sitting in one of the upper rooms of the building and observing the scene. Presently a tent was pitched in the courtyard, and before long some small human-like figures, each appearing to be no more than about a hand's span in height, were seen to emerge from it and raise the call: "His Majesty is coming! Arrange the seats at once!" Other figures then came forth, some of whom were seen to be engaged in sweeping, others in sprinkling water, and thereafter another, who was announced as the chief town crier, raised his call and bade the people assemble for an audience with the king. Next, several groups of figures made their appearance and took

their places, the first attired in hats and sashes after the Persian fashion, the second wielding battleaxes, and the third comprising a number of footmen and executioners carrying bastinados. Finally there appeared, arrayed in regal majesty and crowned with a royal diadem, a kingly figure, bearing himself with the utmost haughtiness and grandeur, at turns advancing and pausing in his progress, who proceeded with great solemnity, poise and dignity to seat himself upon his throne.

**12** At that moment a volley of shots was fired, a fanfare of trumpets was sounded, and king and tent were enveloped in a pall of smoke. When it had cleared, the king, ensconced upon his throne, was seen surrounded by a suite of ministers, princes, and dignitaries of state who, having taken their places, were standing at attention in his presence. A captured thief was then brought before the king, who gave the order that the offender should be beheaded. Without a moment's delay the chief executioner cut off the thief's head, whence a blood-like liquid came forth. After this the king held audience with his court, during which intelligence was received that a rebellion had broken out on a certain frontier. Thereupon the king reviewed his troops and despatched several regiments supported by artillery to quell the uprising. A few moments later cannons were heard booming from behind the tent, and it was announced that a battle had been engaged.

**13** This Youth regarded the scene with great amazement. When the royal audience was ended, the curtain was drawn, and, after some twenty minutes, a man emerged from behind the tent carrying a box under his arm.

**14** "What is this box," I asked him, "and what was the nature of this display?"

**15** "All this lavish display and these elaborate devices," he replied, "the king, the princes, and the ministers, their pomp and glory, their might and power, everything you saw, are now contained within this box."

**16** I swear by My Lord Who, through a single word of His Mouth, hath brought into being all created things! Ever since that day, all the trappings of the world have seemed in the eyes of this Youth akin to that same spectacle. They have never been, nor will they ever be, of any weight and consequence, be it to the extent of a grain of mustard seed. How greatly I marveled that men should pride themselves upon such vanities, whilst those possessed of insight, ere they witness any evidence of human glory, perceive with certainty the inevitability of its waning. "Never

have I looked upon any thing save that I have seen extinction before it; and God, verily, is a sufficient witness!"

**17** It behoveth everyone to traverse this brief span of life with sincerity and fairness. Should one fail to attain unto the recognition of Him Who is the Eternal Truth, let him at least conduct himself with reason and justice. Erelong these outward trappings, these visible treasures, these earthly vanities, these arrayed armies, these adorned vestures, these proud and overweening souls, all shall pass into the confines of the grave, as though into that box. In the eyes of those possessed of insight, all this conflict, contention and vainglory hath ever been, and will ever be, like unto the play and pastimes of children. Take heed, and be not of them that see and yet deny.

**18** Our call concerneth not this Youth and the loved ones of God, for they are already sore-tried and imprisoned and expect nothing from men such as thee. Our purpose is that thou mayest lift up thy head from the couch of heedlessness, shake off the slumber of negligence, and cease to oppose unjustly the servants of God. So long as thy power and ascendancy endure, strive to alleviate the suffering of the oppressed. Shouldst thou judge with fairness and observe with the eye of discernment the conflicts and pursuits of this transient world, thou wouldst readily acknowledge that they are even as the play which We have described.

**19** Harken unto the words of the one true God and pride thyself not in the things of this world. What hath become of those like unto thee who falsely claimed lordship on earth, who sought to quench the light of God in His land and to destroy the foundation of His mighty edifice in His cities? Where are they to be seen now? Be fair in thy judgement and return unto God, that perchance He might cancel the trespasses of thy vain life. Alas, We know that thou shalt never attain unto this, for such is thy cruelty that it hath made hell to blaze and the Spirit to lament, and hath caused the pillars of the Throne to shake and the hearts of the faithful to tremble.

**20** O peoples of the earth! Incline your inner ears to the call of this Wronged One and pause to reflect upon the story that We have recounted. Perchance ye may not be consumed by the fire of self and passion, nor allow the vain and worthless objects of this nether world to withhold you from Him Who is the Eternal Truth. Glory and abasement, riches and poverty, tranquillity and tribulation, all will pass away, and all the peoples of the earth will erelong be laid to

*The Lawh-i-Ra'is continued ... ➡*

rest in their tombs. It behoveth therefore every man of insight to fix his gaze upon the goal of eternity, that perchance by the grace of Him Who is the Ancient King he may attain unto the immortal Kingdom and abide beneath the shade of the Tree of His Revelation.

**21** Though this world be fraught with deception and deceit, yet it continually warneth all men of their impending extinction. The death of the father proclaimeth to the son that he, too, shall pass away. Would that the inhabitants of the world who have amassed riches for themselves and have strayed far from the True One might know who will eventually lay hand on their treasures; but, by the life of Baha, no one knoweth this save God, exalted be His glory.

**22** The poet Sana'i, may God's mercy rest upon him, hath said: "Take heed, O ye whose unseemly conduct hath darkened your faces! Take heed, O ye whose beards have been whitened by age!" Alas, most of the people are fast asleep. They are even as the man who, in his drunkenness, became attracted to a dog, took it in his embrace, and made it his plaything, and who, when the morn of discernment dawned and the light of the sun enveloped the horizon, realized that the object of his affection was but a dog. Then, filled with shame and remorse, he repaired to his abode.

**23** Think not that thou hast abased this Youth or prevailed over Him. The least of creatures ruleth over thee, and yet thou perceivest not. The lowliest and most abject of all things holdeth sway over thee, and that is none other than self and passion, which have ever been reprehensible. Were it not for God's consummate wisdom, thou wouldst have been able to plainly behold thine own helplessness and that of all who dwell on earth. Our abasement is indeed the glory of His Cause, could ye but understand.

**24** This Youth hath ever been disinclined to breathe a word contrary to courtesy, for courtesy is Our raiment, wherewith We have adorned the temples of Our well-favoured servants. Otherwise, some of the deeds that ye believe to be concealed would have been divulged in this Tablet.

**25** O exponent of might and power! These young children and these poor ones in God did not need to be accompanied by officers and soldiers. Upon our arrival in Gallipoli, a major by the name of 'Umar came into Our presence. God is well aware of what he said. After some exchanges in which his own innocence and thy guilt were mentioned, We

declared: "From the outset, a gathering should have been convened at which the learned men of this age could have met with this Youth in order to determine what offence these servants have committed. But now the matter hath gone beyond such considerations, and, according to thine own assertion, thou art charged with incarcerating Us in the most desolate of cities. There is a matter, which, if thou findest it possible, I request thee to submit to His Majesty the Sultan, that for ten minutes this Youth be enabled to meet him, so that he may demand whatsoever he deemeth as a sufficient testimony and regardeth as proof of the veracity of Him Who is the Truth. Should God enable Him to produce it, let him, then, release these wronged ones, and leave them to themselves."

**26** He promised to transmit this message, and to give Us his reply. We received, however, no news from him. Although it becometh not Him Who is the Truth to present Himself before any person, inasmuch as all have been created to obey Him, yet in view of the condition of these little children and the large number of women so far removed from their friends and countries, We have acquiesced in this matter. In spite of this nothing hath resulted. 'Umar himself is alive and accessible. Inquire from him, that the truth may be made known unto you.

**27** Most of Our companions now lie sick in this prison, and none knoweth what befell Us, except God, the Almighty, the All-Knowing. In the days following Our arrival, two of these servants hastened to the realms above. For an entire day the guards insisted that, until they were paid for the shrouds and burial, those blessed bodies could not be removed, although no one had requested any help from them. At that time we were devoid of earthly means, and pleaded that they leave the matter unto us and allow those present to carry the bodies, but they refused. Finally, a carpet was taken to the bazaar to be sold, and the sum obtained was delivered to the guards. Later, it was learned that they had merely dug a shallow grave into which they had placed both blessed bodies, although they had taken twice the amount required for shrouds and burial.

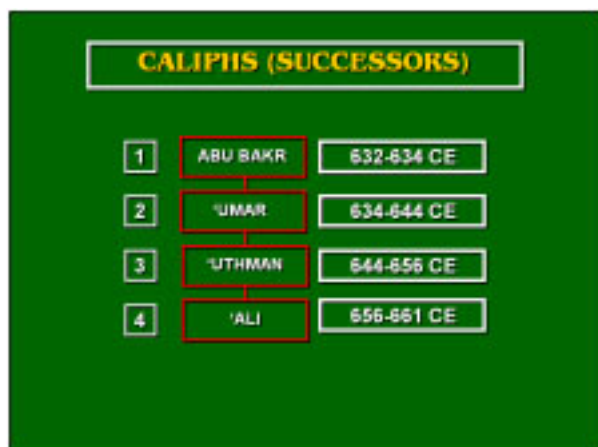
**28** The pen is powerless to depict and the tongue faileth to describe the trials which We have suffered. Yet sweeter than honey to Me is the bitterness of such tribulations. Would that at every instant all the afflictions of the world could, in the path of God and

**29** We implore God for patience and forbearance, inasmuch as thou art but a feeble creature and bereft of comprehension. Wert thou to awaken and inhale the fragrance of the breezes that waft from the retreats of eternity, thou wouldst readily abandon all that thou dost possess and in which thou dost rejoice, and choose to abide in one of the dilapidated rooms of this Most Great Prison. Beseech God to grant thee such mature understanding as to enable thee to distinguish praiseworthy actions from those which merit blame. Peace be upon him who followeth the way of guidance!



“trampled upon so **sacred** a right and unchained the forces of so distressful a **schism**”

Sunnites regard the first Caliphs as legitimate successors of Muhammad and accept the 'six authentic' books of tradition. They believe the Caliph must be elected and must be a member of the Quraysh—the Prophet's tribe.



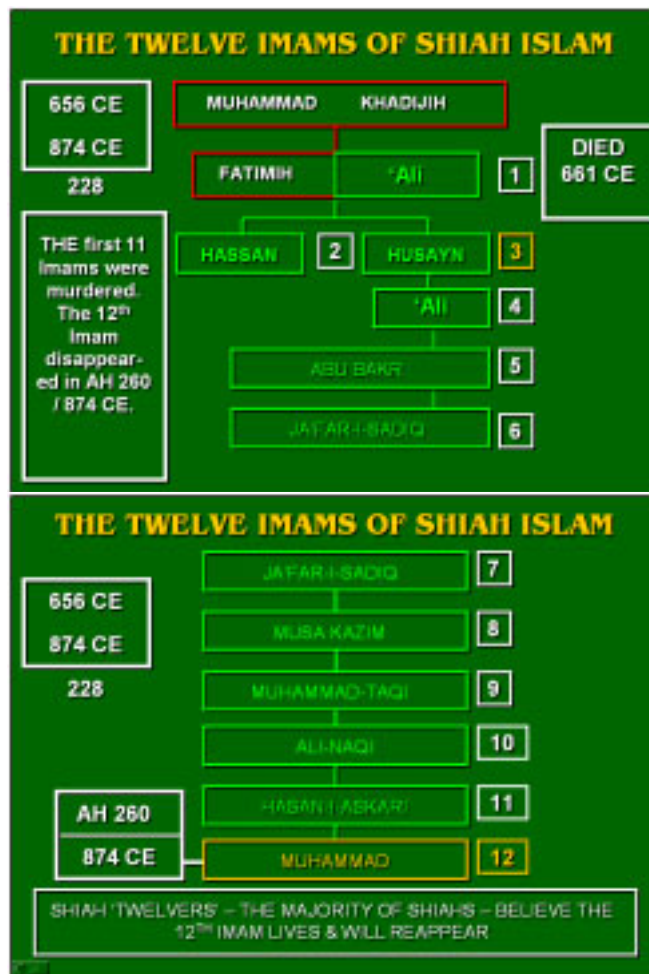
Shi'ites – on the other hand – believe that the successor must be a descendant of Muhammad through Fatima and 'Ali and be designated an Imam by the Imam that immediately preceded him.

Sunnis comprise roughly eighty-five percent (85%) of all Muslims. Shi'ites complete the other fifteen percent (15%).

The schism came out into the open sometime after the passing 'Ali—the first Imam (see chart upper right) of Shi'ah Islam.

—Ed.

“Forerunner [The Báb] was Himself a descendant of the very **Imams** whose authority that institution had repudiated”



## “Hegelian philosophy”

### Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831)

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel was born on August 27, 1770 in Stuttgart. His father was a revenue officer with the civil service, and he had a Protestant upbringing. He studied at the Stuttgart gymnasium where he became familiar with Greek and Roman classics. Hegel's father wished him to be a clergyman, and from 1788 to 1793 he studied theology at the seminary at the University of Tübingen. It was here that he first formed important friendships with Friedrich Hölderlin and Friedrich W.J. von Schelling. The intellectual lives of these three friends were closely entwined and they had profound influences on one another's philosophical foundations.

After Hegel graduated from Tübingen he went Bern and then Frankfurt to work as a private tutor. In Frankfurt he met with Hölderlin again. He was able to end his work as a tutor when he inherited a sufficient amount on the event of his father's death, and he proceeded to dedicate himself to his work on religious and social themes. At this time it seems that he imagined his work to be in the area of educational reform. In 1800 his work took a turn, and he became interested in the “critical” philosophy of Immanuel Kant. In 1801 he moved to join his friend Schelling at the University of Jena, where the two of them edited the *Critical Journal of Philosophy*. This same year Hegel published his first philosophical essay entitled *The Difference between Fichte's and Schelling's System of Philosophy*, in which he argues for Schelling's success and Fichte's failure in the project of completing Kant's transcendental idealism.

Hegel wrote a number of essays during his stay at Jena. In *On the Scientific Modes of Treatment of Natural Law-Its Place in Practical Philosophy and Its Relationship to the Positive Science of Law*, often referred to as the essay on Natural Law, he criticizes both British empirical and Kantian formal approaches to natural law. His argument is that empiricism forms conclusions that are limited by its contexts and materials, therefore it is unable to form propositions that are universally valid regarding the concepts of reflective consciousness to social and political experience or the concepts of social and political institutions. The problem with formalist conclusions is that they remain insubstantial, and too abstract, failing to form a concrete link between human reason and human experience. Hegel felt philosophical science had the responsibility to definitively

link the development of the rational powers of the human mind to lived experience.

In 1807 Hegel published *Die Phänomenologie des Geistes* (*The Phenomenology of Spirit*), his first major work. He originally imagined this work as the first part of a comprehensive scientific philosophy, but eventually came to see it as an introduction to his system. Written in the context of epistemological, anthropological, and cultural themes of human history, this text is an account of the development of consciousness and self-consciousness, or the development of spirit. Hegel traces the development of the mind in relation to experience, concentrating on questions regarding the meaning of cognitive activities like perceiving and knowing, and the nature of reality and reason. The fundamental characteristic of human awareness, according to Hegel, is the relationship between self and otherness. His ontology is based in humankind's desire for and estrangement from objects, what he considers to be the primordial experience of the world. He claims that individual consciousness is prevented from finding freedom and independence when it comes up against the barrier of otherness in the external reality of the natural and social world. This otherness cannot be destroyed without the destruction of self, so we search for reconciliation with otherness and a universalization of consciousness through the other. Hegel uses a model of dominant and subservient consciousnesses to illustrate the problem of achieving integration of consciousness with itself through the overcoming of its otherness. This dialectic sets up the main difficulty for gaining self-recognition through mutual recognition, or the realization of self-consciousness. The relationship between the dominant and the obedient, or the independent and the dependent, is what leads to the incomplete resolution of the struggle for recognition, or mutual recognition, between consciousnesses.

Hegel worked as an editor of a newspaper in Bamberg, then from 1808-1815 he was a philosophy teacher and the headmaster at a gymnasium in Nuremberg. He was married in Nuremberg during this time, and he wrote and published *Science of Logic*. In 1816 he was appointed to chair of philosophy at the University of Heidelberg. In Heidelberg he published the *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, in which appears an abbreviated version of *Science of Logic* and an application of its principles to the Philosophy of Nature and Philosophy of Spirit. In 1818 he took the prestigious position of chair of philosophy at the University of Berlin. In 1821 Hegel published *Elements of the Philosophy of Right* grounded on the section of the *Encyclopaedia* exploring the “objective spirit”. In this major



work in political philosophy Hegel gives an account of the nature of philosophy, setting out his approach to the nature and limits of human cognition.

Hegel published other versions of the *Encyclopaedia* during the next ten years, enjoying great recognition in Berlin. After his death in 1831 versions of his lectures were published on the history of philosophy and the philosophy of religion, history and aesthetics.

Hegel's goal was to form a comprehensive philosophical system in which both the history and future of philosophy might be included and understood. He saw the main subject of philosophy to be reality, and understood the necessity of conceiving of a full account of reality, or the developmental process of everything that is. He referred to this as the Absolute, or Absolute Spirit, and felt that philosophy's task was to chart its development. This charting involves the clarification of the Absolute's internal rational structure, the demonstration its manifestation in nature and human history, and the explication of its teleological nature, or revealing its end purpose.

In his political work, Hegel describes three types of government: tyranny, found in underdeveloped states; democracy, found in states where there is no distinction between the public and private individual; and hereditary monarchy, found where a central government is combined with indirect representation through Estates. He felt hereditary monarchy to be the most appropriate form of political authority for the modern world. He saw the role of the State as expressing the Spirit of a society, as a realization of God in the world. His view was that any true religion would support this kind of kingdom of God on earth, so a religion's position could never be in opposition or dominance to the state.

Hegel followed the Greek philosopher Parmenides in believing that what is rational is real, and what is real is rational. This is his rational structure of the Absolute, and must be regarded in conjunction with his idea that the Absolute must be seen as pure Thought, Spirit, or Mind, in a process of self-development, governed by the logic of dialectic. The dialectical method is the notion that the conflict of opposites creates movement or progress. The dialectical method is often studied in terms of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis, although Hegel seldom used this terminology. The thesis is a primary idea, whose incompleteness gives rise to an opposite or conflicting idea, or antithesis. The synthesis is a third term which arises from the conflict between the first two, overcoming the

opposition by reconciling the truth found in both the thesis and antithesis. This synthesis becomes a new thesis, inspiring a new antithesis and synthesis, and continuing an evolution of intellectual or historical development. Hegel argues that this dialectical development describes the movement of Absolute Spirit toward an ultimate goal. Reality is the Absolute in a process of dialectical unfolding, manifesting itself in nature and history as it develops. In *The Phenomenology of Mind* Hegel traces the manifestation of the Absolute through the stages of consciousness, self-consciousness, and reason.

Schelling took the chair at Berlin after Hegel's death, reputedly because the government of the time wished to counter the enormous influence Hegel's philosophy had had on a generation of students. Although they had been close, Schelling was more of a religious philosopher than Hegel, and criticized Hegel's rationalism. Schelling's criticisms of Hegel's work influenced existentialist thought, primarily through the works of Kierkegaard, who attended Schelling's lectures. Schelling's interpretations of Hegelian philosophy has had a major influence on its subsequent study, contributing to the common understanding of it as a somewhat dogmatic metaphysics. Hegel had supported progressive but non-revolutionary politics, however many of his admirers split into extreme political factions. Karl Marx was among them and, inspired by Hegel's work, was to develop his own scientific approach to society and history. Hegel is counted among the most influential philosophers in Western philosophical and political history.

The URL for the foregoing information is <http://www.egs.edu/resources/hegel.html>.



“precarious relationships now existing  
between the Holy See and certain nations in  
the continent of Europe”

Perhaps this statement refers to the fact that—by the date of Shoghi Effendi’s letter—March, 1936—both Italy and Germany had become fascist regimes led by egomaniacal autocrats (Mussolini and Hitler). In October 1935 Italy invaded Eithiopia. The League of Nations Assembly met and voted 50 to 4 to condemn Italy’s invasion of Eithiopia. (Austria, Hungry, Italy and Albania were the 4 opposing.)

Since the Holy See (the Papacy and Vatican) is headquartered in Rome, Italy it would be politically very risky for the Pope to publicly condemn Mussolini’s naked aggression of a weak African nation (Abysinnia) Eithiopia.

—Ed.



## “The Great Depression”

**Great Depression in the United States**, worst and longest economic collapse in the history of the modern industrial world, lasting from the end of 1929 until the early 1940s. Beginning in the United States, the depression spread to most of the world's industrial countries, which in the 20th century had become economically dependent on one another. The Great Depression saw rapid declines in the production and sale of goods and a sudden, severe rise in unemployment. Businesses and banks closed their doors, people lost their jobs, homes, and savings, and many depended on charity to survive. In 1933, at the worst point in the depression, more than 15 million Americans—one-quarter of the nation's workforce—were unemployed.

The depression was caused by a number of serious weaknesses in the economy. Although the 1920s appeared on the surface to be a prosperous time, income was unevenly distributed. The wealthy made large profits, but more and more Americans spent more than they earned, and farmers faced low prices and heavy debt. The lingering effects of **World War I** (1914-1918) caused economic problems in many countries, as Europe struggled to pay war debts and reparations. These problems contributed to the crisis that began the Great Depression: the disastrous U.S. stock market crash of 1929, which ruined thousands of investors and destroyed confidence in the economy. Continuing throughout the 1930s, the depression ended in the United States only when massive spending for **World War II** began.

The depression produced lasting effects on the United States that are still apparent more than half a century after it ended. It led to the election of President **Franklin Delano Roosevelt**, who created the programs known as the New Deal to overcome the effects of the Great Depression. These programs expanded government intervention into new areas of social and economic concerns and created social-assistance measures on the national level. The Great Depression fundamentally changed



the relationship between the government and the people, who came to expect and accept a larger federal role in their lives and the economy.

The programs of the New Deal also brought together a new, liberal political alliance in the United States. Roosevelt's policies won the support of labor unions, blacks, people who received government relief, ethnic and religious minorities, intellectuals, and some farmers, forming a coalition that would be the backbone of the Democratic Party for decades to come.

On a personal level, the hardships suffered during the depression affected many Americans' attitudes toward life, work, and their community. Many people who survived the depression wanted to protect themselves from ever again going hungry or lacking necessities. Some developed habits of frugality and careful saving for the rest of their lives, and many focused on accumulating material possessions to create a comfortable life, one far different from that which they experienced in the depression years.

The depression also played a major role in world events. In Germany, the economic collapse opened the way for dictator **Adolf Hitler** to come to power, which in turn led to World War II.

### Causes of the Depression

It is a common misconception that the stock market crash of October 1929 was the *cause* of the Great Depression. The two events were closely related, but both were the results of deep problems in the

*The Great Depression* continued ... ➡

modern economy that were building up through the “prosperity decade” of the 1920s.

As is typical of post-war periods, Americans in the Roaring Twenties turned inward, away from international issues and social concerns and toward greater individualism. The emphasis was on getting rich and enjoying new fads, new inventions, and new ideas. The traditional values of rural America were being challenged by the city-oriented Jazz Age, symbolized by what many considered the shocking behavior of young women who wore short skirts and makeup, smoked, and drank.

The self-centered attitudes of the 1920s seemed to fit nicely with the needs of the economy. Modern industry had the capacity to produce vast quantities of consumer goods, but this created a fundamental problem: Prosperity could continue only if demand was made to grow as rapidly as supply. Accordingly, people had to be persuaded to abandon such traditional values as saving, postponing pleasures and purchases, and buying only what they needed. “The key to economic prosperity,” a General Motors executive declared in 1929, “is the organized creation of dissatisfaction.” Advertising methods that had been developed to build support for World War I were used to persuade people to buy such relatively new products as automobiles and such completely new ones as radios and household appliances. The resulting mass consumption kept the economy going through most of the 1920s.

But there was an underlying economic problem. Income was distributed very unevenly, and the portion going to the wealthiest Americans grew larger as the decade proceeded. This was due largely to two factors: While businesses showed remarkable gains in productivity during the 1920s, workers got a relatively small share of the wealth this produced. At the same time, huge cuts were made in the top income-tax rates. Between 1923 and 1929, manufacturing output per person-hour increased by 32 percent, but workers’ wages grew by only 8 percent. Corporate profits shot up by 65 percent in the same period, and the government let the wealthy keep more of those profits. The Revenue Act of 1926 cut the taxes of those making \$1 million or more by more than two-thirds.

As a result of these trends, in 1929 the top 0.1 percent of American families had a total income equal to that of the bottom 42 percent. This meant that many people who were willing to listen to the advertisers and purchase new products did not have enough money to do so. To get around this difficulty, the 1920s produced another innovation—“credit,” an attractive name for consumer debt. People were allowed to “buy now, pay later.” But this only put off the day when consumers accumulated so much debt that they could not keep buying up all the products coming off assembly lines. That day came in 1929.

American farmers—who represented one-quarter of the economy—were already in an economic depression during the 1920s, which made it difficult for them to take part in the consumer buying spree. Farmers had expanded their output during World War I, when demand for farm goods was high and production in Europe was cut sharply. But after the war, farmers found themselves competing in an over-supplied international market. Prices fell, and farmers were often unable to sell their products for a profit.

International problems also weakened the economy. After World War I the United States became the world’s chief creditor as European countries struggled to pay war debts and reparations. Many American bankers were not ready for this new role. They lent heavily and unwisely to borrowers in Europe, especially Germany, who would have difficulty repaying the loans, particularly if there was a serious economic downturn. These huge debts made the international banking structure extremely unstable by the late 1920s.

In addition, the United States maintained high tariffs on goods imported from other countries, at the same time that it was making foreign loans and trying to export products. This combination could not be sustained: If other nations could not sell their goods in the United States, they could not make enough money to buy American products or repay American loans. All major industrial countries pursued similar policies of trying to advance their own interests without regard to the international economic consequences.

*The Great Depression* continued ... ➡

The rising incomes of the wealthiest Americans fueled rapid growth in the stock market, especially between 1927 and 1929. Soon the prices of stocks were rising far beyond the worth of the shares of the companies they represented. People were willing to pay inflated prices because they believed the stock prices would continue to rise and they could soon sell their stocks at a profit.

The widespread belief that anyone could get rich led many less affluent Americans into the market as well. Investors bought millions of shares of stock “on margin,” a risky practice similar to buying products on credit. They paid only a small part of the price and borrowed the rest, gambling that they could sell the stock at a high enough price to repay the loan and make a profit.

For a time this was true: In 1928 the price of stock in the Radio Corporation of America (RCA) multiplied by nearly five times. The Dow Jones industrial average—an index that tracks the stock prices of key industrial companies—doubled in value in less than two years. But the stock boom could not last. The great bull market of the late 1920s was a classic example of a speculative “bubble” scheme, so called because it expands until it bursts. In the fall of 1929 confidence that prices would keep rising faltered, then failed. Starting in late October the market plummeted as investors began selling stocks. On October 29, in the worst day of the panic, stocks lost \$10 billion to \$15 billion in value. By mid-November almost all of the gains of the previous two years had been wiped out, with losses estimated at \$30 billion.

The stock market crash announced the beginning of the Great Depression, but the deep economic problems of the 1920s had already converged a few months earlier to start the downward spiral. The credit of a large portion of the nation’s consumers had been exhausted, and they were spending much of their current income to pay for past, rather than new, purchases. Unsold inventories had begun to pile up in warehouses during the summer of 1929.

The crash affected the economy the way exposure to cold affects the human body, lowering the body’s resistance to infectious agents that are already present. The crash reduced the ability of the

economy to fight off the underlying sicknesses of unevenly distributed wealth, agricultural depression, and banking problems.

### Economic Collapse (1929-1933)

The stock market crash was just the first dramatic phase of a prolonged economic collapse. Conditions continued to worsen for the next three years, as the confident, optimistic attitudes of the 1920s gave way to a sense of defeat and despair. Stock prices continued to decline. By late 1932 they were only about 20 percent of what they had been before the crash. With little consumer demand for products, hundreds of factories and mills closed, and the output of American manufacturing plants was cut almost in half from 1929 to 1932.

Unemployment in those three years soared from 3.2 percent to 24.9 percent, leaving more than 15 million Americans out of work. Some remained unemployed for years; those who had jobs faced major wage cuts, and many people could find only part-time work. Jobless men sold apples and shined shoes to earn a little money.

Many banks had made loans to businesses and people who now could not repay them, and some banks had also lost money by investing in the stock market. When depositors hit by the depression needed to withdraw their savings, the banks often did not have the money to give them. This caused other depositors to panic and demand their cash, ruining the banks. By the winter of 1932 to 1933, the banking system reached the point of nearly complete collapse; more than 9000 banks, nearly 40 percent of the national total of 25,000, had failed, wiping out the savings of millions of people.

As people lost their jobs and savings, mortgages on many homes and farms were foreclosed. Homeless people built shacks out of old crates and formed shantytowns, which were called “Hoovervilles” out of bitterness toward President **Herbert Hoover**, who refused to provide government aid to the unemployed.

The plight of farmers, who had been in a depression since 1920, worsened. Already low prices for their

*The Great Depression* continued ... ➡

goods fell by 50 percent between 1929 and 1932. While many people went hungry, surplus crops couldn't be sold for a profit.

Natural forces inflicted another blow on farmers. Beginning in Arkansas in 1930, a severe drought spread across the Great Plains through the middle of the decade. Once-productive topsoil turned to dust that was carried away by strong winds, piling up in drifts against houses and barns. The area became known as the **Dust Bowl**, as the drought destroyed the livelihood of hundreds of thousands of small farmers. Packing up their families and meager possessions, many of these farmers migrated to California in search of work. Author **John Steinbeck** created an unforgettable fictional portrait of their fate in the novel *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939).

### **Initial Response to the Depression**

The initial government response to the Great Depression was ineffective, as President Hoover insisted that the economy was sound and that prosperity would soon return. Hoover believed the basic need was to restore public confidence so businesses would begin to invest and expand production, providing jobs and income to restore the economy to health. But business owners saw no reason to increase production while unsold goods clogged their shelves. By 1932 investment had dropped to less than 5 percent of its 1929 level.

Convinced that a balanced federal budget was essential to restoring business confidence, Hoover sought to cut government spending and raise taxes. But in the face of a collapsing economy, this served only to reduce demand further. As conditions worsened, Hoover's administration eventually provided emergency loans to banks and industry, expanded public works, and helped states offer relief. But it was too little, too late.

The epitome of a "self-made man," Hoover believed in individualism and self-reliance. As more and more Americans lost jobs and faced hunger, Hoover asserted that "mutual self-help through voluntary giving" was the way to meet people's needs. Private giving increased greatly, reaching a record high in 1932, but charitable organizations were overwhelmed by the enormous number of people in

need. To many, government assistance seemed the only answer, but Hoover was convinced that giving federal relief payments would undermine recipients' self-reliance, and he resisted this step throughout his term.

The tension between citizens seeking government action and Hoover's administration came to a head in June 1932. More than 20,000 World War I veterans marched on Washington, D.C., to ask for early payment of government bonuses they had been promised. But the government refused, and when some members of the so-called Bonus Army didn't leave the capital, federal troops used tear gas and bayonets to evict the men and their families (see **Bonus March**).

Hoover and most of his Republican Party firmly supported protective tariffs to block imports and stimulate the American economy by increasing sales of American-made products. In 1930 they enacted the Hawley-Smoot Tariff, which established the highest average tariff in American history. This was a crushing blow to European economies, which were already sinking into depression. Other nations retaliated by raising their own tariffs. This action helped to worsen and spread the depression by choking off international trade. Between 1929 and 1932 the total value of world trade had declined by more than half.

### **International Effects of the Depression**

Like Hoover, leaders of other nations around the world were determined to balance their budgets by raising taxes and slashing government spending. Germany, struggling to pay reparations imposed by the peace settlements after World War I, suffered to a larger extent than any other major industrial nation. Nearly 40 percent of the German workforce was unemployed by 1932. In these desperate economic circumstances, large numbers of Germans began to listen to the tirades of Hitler, who blamed the depression on Jews and Communists and promised to restore Germany to economic and military strength. After his Nazi (National Socialist) Party became the strongest political force in

Germany, Hitler was named chancellor in January 1933. He soon seized absolute control of the German government.

In Great Britain the effects of the depression were not as dramatic because the nation had been suffering from high unemployment through much of the 1920s. Unlike the United States, Britain already had unemployment insurance and government welfare payments to ease the burden on the jobless. The depression took longer to hit hard in France because it was less industrialized than the United States, Germany, and Great Britain. Also, because so many French men had died in World War I, the workforce was very small, and it took a severe economic decline before the demand for workers fell below the small supply.

### **Roosevelt and the New Deal**

By the election year of 1932, the depression had made Hoover so unpopular that the election of the Democratic presidential candidate Franklin Delano Roosevelt was all but assured. Confidence—Hoover's elusive goal—was Roosevelt's most abundant quality. Declaring in his inaugural speech that "the only thing we have to fear is fear itself," Roosevelt quickly lifted the nation's spirits with the rapid and unprecedented actions of the **New Deal**.

Within days of his inauguration Roosevelt called Congress into a special session, during which many pieces of emergency legislation were passed. Following the example of many states, Roosevelt proclaimed a nationwide bank holiday, closing all banks to stop panicky depositors from withdrawing their money. A few days later he broadcast the first of many fireside chats on the radio, reassuring Americans that all banks that were allowed to reopen would be safe.

The New Deal produced a wide variety of programs to reduce unemployment, assist businesses and agriculture, regulate banking and the stock market, and provide security for the needy, elderly, and disabled. The basic idea of early New Deal programs was to lower the supply of goods to the current, depressed level of consumption. Under the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1933, the government sought to raise farm prices by paying farmers not to grow surplus crops. Parts of the National Industrial

Recovery Act created codes for many industries that regulated competition while guaranteeing minimum wages and maximum hours for workers.

The New Deal also tried to increase demand, pumping large amounts of money into the economy through public works programs and relief measures. Public works projects not only provided jobs but built schools, dams, and roads; the innovative **Tennessee Valley Authority** provided electric power and improved living conditions in an area of the southeast United States.

However, Roosevelt never embraced the new ideas of British economist **John Maynard Keynes**, who argued that intentionally unbalancing the budget to a significant degree would boost demand to the point where recovery would take place. The U.S. gross public debt increased from \$22.5 billion in 1933 to \$40.44 billion in 1939, but Roosevelt was reluctant to accept any more deficit spending than seemed absolutely necessary to prevent mass suffering. He did not create an unbalanced budget on the scale Keynes advocated until World War II forced it upon him. Once the government started spending at the levels Keynes had suggested, the depression ended.

The New Deal helped people to survive the depression, but acted as a painkiller rather than a cure for the nation's economic ills. Unemployment was reduced, but remained high through the 1930s. Farm income rose from a low of \$1.9 billion in 1932 to \$4.2 billion in 1940. The demands of the depression led the United States to institute social-security programs and accept labor unions, measures that had been taken decades earlier in many European nations.

### **Life During the Depression**

The Great Depression had a substantial and varied impact on the lives of Americans. Physically and psychologically, it was devastating to many people, who not only lacked adequate food, shelter, and clothing but felt they were to blame for their desperate state.

Although few people died from starvation, many did not have enough to eat. Some people searched

*The Great Depression* continued ... ➡

garbage dumps for food or ate weeds. Malnutrition took a toll: A study conducted in eight American cities found that families that had a member working full time experienced 66 percent less illness than those in which everyone was unemployed.

The psychological impact was equally damaging. During the prosperity of the 1920s, many Americans believed success went to those who deserved it. Given that attitude, the unemployment brought by the depression was a crushing blow. If the economic system really distributed rewards on the basis of merit, those who lost their jobs had to conclude that it was their own fault. Self-blame and self-doubt became epidemic. These attitudes declined after the New Deal began, however. The establishment of government programs to counteract the depression indicated to many of the unemployed that the crisis was a large social problem, not a matter of personal failing. Still, having to ask for assistance was humiliating for many men who had thought of themselves as self-sufficient and breadwinners for their families.

Because society expected a man to provide for his family, the psychological trauma of the Great Depression was often more severe for men than women. Many men argued that women, especially married women, should not be hired while men were unemployed. Yet the percentage of women in the workforce actually increased slightly during the depression, as women took jobs to replace their husbands' lost pay checks or to supplement spouses' reduced wages. Women had been excluded from most of the manufacturing jobs that were hardest hit by the depression, which meant they were less likely than men to be thrown out of work. Some fields that had been defined as women's work, such as clerical, teaching, and social-service jobs, actually grew during the New Deal.

The effects of the depression on children were often radically different from the impact on their parents. During the depression many children took on greater responsibilities at an earlier age than later generations would. Some teenagers found jobs when their parents could not, reversing the normal roles of provider and dependent. Sometimes children had to comfort their despairing parents. A

12-year-old boy in Chicago, for example, wrote to President and Mrs. Roosevelt in 1936 to seek help for his father, who was always "crying because he can't find work [and] I feel sorry for him." The depression that weakened the self-reliance of many adult men strengthened that quality in many children.

The depression's impact was less dramatic, but ultimately more damaging, for minorities in America than for whites. Since they were "born in depression," many blacks scarcely noticed a change at the beginning of the 1930s. Over time, however, blacks suffered to an even greater extent than whites, since they were usually the last hired and first fired. By 1932 about 50 percent of the nation's black workers were unemployed. Blacks were frequently forced out of jobs in order to give them to unemployed whites.

Yet the depression decade was one of important positive change for blacks. First lady Eleanor Roosevelt and several leading New Deal figures were active champions of black rights, and most New Deal programs prohibited racial discrimination. These rules were often ignored in the South, but the fact that they were included at all was a major step forward. Blacks were sufficiently impressed with the New Deal to cause a large majority of black voters to switch their allegiance from the Republican to the Democratic Party during the depression years.

Other minority populations had experiences similar to those of blacks during the depression. Native Americans were even less likely than blacks to notice a downturn when the depression began; they already fared poorly by virtually every social or economic indicator. But Native Americans, like blacks, were brought into New Deal relief programs that in theory did not discriminate, and an attempt was made, through the Indian Reorganization Act, to enable tribes to reestablish their identities and cultural practices. In industrial cities such as Detroit, Gary, and Los Angeles and in agricultural regions such as California's San Joaquin Valley, Mexican Americans were seen as holding jobs that should go to whites. Repatriation (meaning deportation) programs were instituted to persuade Chicanos to return to Mexico, often through intimidation.





“an atrocious and bloody war”

With the rise of the dictator Benito Mussolini, Italian designs toward Ethiopia were revived, and in October 1935 Italy invaded the country (see Italy: The Ethiopian Campaign). An attempt by the League of Nations to halt the conquest failed. Addis Ababa fell to the invaders, and in May 1936 Mussolini proclaimed Italy’s King Victor Emmanuel III emperor of Ethiopia. Haile Selassie was forced to flee the country and take refuge in England, but he was restored to the throne by British and Ethiopian forces in 1941.

"Ethiopia,"

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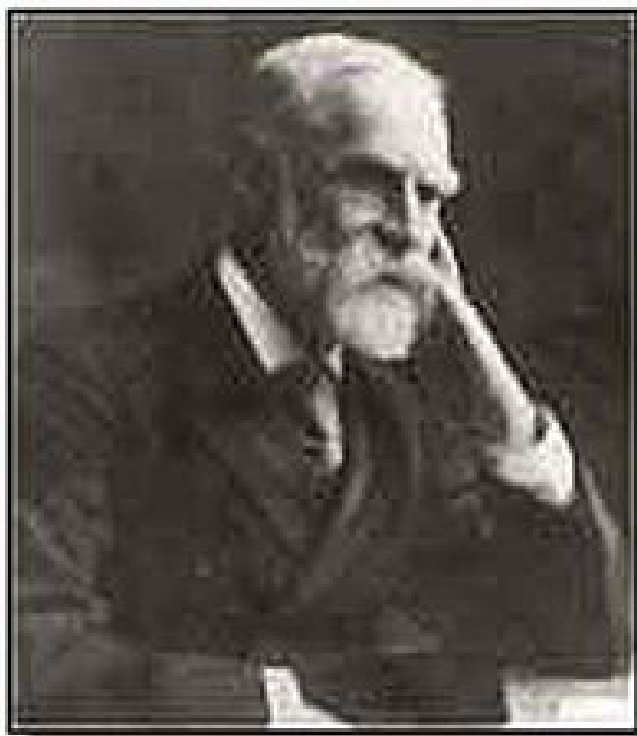
Benito Mussolini



Haile Selassie



## “Lord Bryce”



Lord Bryce

Updated - Saturday, 30 August, 2003 Viscount James Bryce (1838-1922) was responsible for producing the influential Bryce Report into alleged German atrocities in occupied Belgium during 1914 and a subsequent report on the Armenian Massacres conducted by the Turkish government. Following an education at Glasgow University and then at Oxford, Bryce practised law in London before taking up a professorship of civil law at Oxford. It was during this period that Bryce established a reputation as a notable historian, his works including *History of the Holy Roman Empire*, published in 1864. Entering British politics Bryce established himself as a leading Liberal, serving as President of the Board of Trade and Chief Secretary to Ireland. His private travels through Russia to Ararat resulted in the publication of *Transcaucasia and Ararat* in 1878. Ten years later he published *The American Commonwealth*, in which he expressed his views on sociology and philosophy. From 1907-13 Bryce served as

Britain's highly respected Ambassador to the U.S., a popularity born out of his deep knowledge of and fondness for the United States. Thus Bryce's appointment towards the close of 1914 by British Prime Minister Herbert Asquith to investigate reports of alleged German barbarity towards civilians in occupied Belgium was widely welcomed. His report, published the following May (*Report of the Committee on Alleged German Outrages*), was clear in its condemnation of the German Army's conduct in Belgium. In spite of the report's tendency to highlight the more extreme examples of German rule in Belgium - and to cite unreliable evidence, which led to the report's being largely discredited in the immediate post-war years - it was viewed as credible in the United States, with consequent damage to German interests in Washington. Publishing *Modern Democracies* in 1921, James Bryce died in 1922.

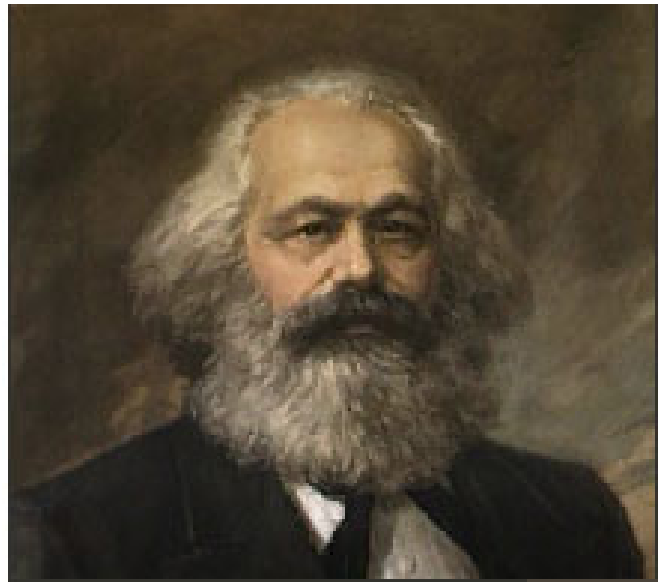
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## COMMUNISM

**Communism**, a concept or system of society in which the major resources and means of production are owned by the community rather than by individuals. In theory, such societies provide for equal sharing of all work, according to ability, and all benefits, according to need. Some conceptions of communist societies assume that, ultimately, coercive government would be unnecessary and therefore that such a society would be without rulers. Until the ultimate stages are reached, however, communism involves the abolition of private property by a revolutionary movement; responsibility for meeting public needs is then vested in the state.

As a concept of an ideal society, communism is derived from ancient sources, including Plato's Republic and the earliest Christian communes. In the early 19th century, the idea of a communist society was a response of the poor and the dislocated to the beginnings of modern capitalism. At that time communism was the basis for a number of utopian settlements; most communistic experiments, however, eventually failed (see Communal Living; Cooperatives; Harmony Society). Most of these small-scale private experiments involved voluntary cooperation, with everyone participating in the governing process.

Later the term communism was reserved for the philosophy advanced by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in their Communist Manifesto and the movement they helped create in Central Europe. Since 1917 the term has denoted those who regard the Russian Revolution as a model that all Marxists should follow. Beginning with the Russian Revolution, moreover, the center of gravity of global communism has shifted away from Central and Western Europe; from the late 1940s through the 1980s, communist movements were often linked with Third World strivings for national independence and social change.



**Marx, Karl** (1818-1883), German political philosopher and revolutionist, cofounder with Friedrich Engels of scientific socialism (modern communism), and, as such, one of the most influential thinkers of all times.

Marx was born in Trier and was educated at the universities of Bonn, Berlin, and Jena. In 1842, shortly after contributing his first article to the Cologne newspaper Rheinische Zeitung, Marx became editor of the paper. His writings in the Rheinische Zeitung criticizing contemporary political and social conditions embroiled him in controversy with the authorities, and in 1843 Marx was compelled to resign his editorial post, and soon afterward the Rheinische Zeitung was forced to discontinue publication. Marx then went to Paris. There, as a result of his further studies in philosophy, history, and political science, he adopted communist beliefs. In 1844, when Engels visited him in Paris, the two men found that they had independently arrived at identical views on the nature of revolutionary problems. They began a collaboration to elucidate systematically the theoretical principles of communism and to organize an international working-class movement dedicated to those principles. For information on their collaboration, which continued until Marx's death, see Engels, Friedrich.

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*Communism* continued ... ➡

## “the Dictatorship of the Proletariat”

Blanqui, Louis Auguste (1805-1881), French revolutionary socialist and leader of many uprisings against the 19th century regime in France.

Blanqui was born in Puget-Théniers; he was the brother of the economist Jerome Adolphe Blanqui. Educated in law and medicine, Blanqui became a Republican, taking part in the overthrow of Charles X in the 1830 July Revolution. As a member of the French Carbonari, a secret revolutionary society, Blanqui supported the early reign of Louis Philippe but in May 1839 Blanqui helped organize an unsuccessful insurrection and was arrested and condemned to life imprisonment. Pardoned early in 1848, he participated in the overthrow of Louis Philippe's regime in that year, but he was again imprisoned for ten years for complicity in the abortive leftist rising of May 1848. While in prison, he developed his own theory of socialism, distinguished by the idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat. He believed in the necessity of revolution but also favored a gradual evolution from capitalism to communism in the economic sphere.

Returning from exile in Belgium, Blanqui staged another uprising in August 1870, but the fall of the Second Empire under Napoleon III came on September 4, 1870, when France was defeated in the Franco-Prussian War. Blanqui briefly headed a provisional government in October 1870. His followers formed a majority in the revolutionary Commune of Paris, which ended with the slaughter of more than 20,000 Communards by French troops during May 1871. After the defeat of the Commune, Blanqui was again sent to prison but was released in 1879. His most important work is *Critique sociale* (Social Criticism, posthumously published 1885).<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>"Blanqui, Louis Auguste,"

### THE THREE FALSE GODS

This vital force is dying out, this mighty agency has been scorned, this radiant light obscured, this impregnable stronghold abandoned, this beauteous robe discarded. God Himself has indeed been dethroned from the hearts of men, and an idolatrous world passionately and clamorously hails and worships the false gods which its own idle fancies have fatuously created, and its misguided hands so impiously exalted. The chief idols in the desecrated temple of mankind are none other than the triple gods of **Nationalism, Racialism** and **Communism**, at whose altars governments and peoples, whether democratic or totalitarian, at peace or at war, of the East or of the West, Christian or Islamic, are, in various forms and in different degrees, now worshipping. Their high priests are the politicians and the worldly-wise, the so-called sages of the age; their sacrifice, the flesh and blood of the slaughtered multitudes; their incantations outworn shibboleths and insidious and irreverent formulas; their incense, the smoke of anguish that ascends from the lacerated hearts of the bereaved, the maimed, and the homeless.

The theories and policies, so unsound, so pernicious, which deify the state and exalt the nation above mankind, which seek to subordinate the sister races of the world to one single race, which discriminate between the black and the white, and which tolerate the dominance of one privileged class over all others - these are the dark, the false, and crooked doctrines for which any man or people who believes in them, or acts upon them, must, sooner or later, incur the wrath and chastisement of God. "Movements," is the warning sounded by 'Abdu'l-Baha, "newly born and worldwide in their range, will exert their utmost effort for the advancement of their designs, **The Movement of the Left** will acquire great importance. Its influence will spread."

—Shoghi Effendi, *The Promised Day is Come*,  
113-114 [Written in 1941]



## “the League of Nations”

LEAGUE OF NATIONS, international alliance for the preservation of peace. The league existed from 1920 to 1946. The first meeting was held in Geneva, on November 15, 1920, with 42 nations represented. The last meeting was held on April 8, 1946; at that time the league was superseded by the United Nations (UN). During the league's 26 years, a total of 63 nations belonged at one time or another; 28 were members for the entire period (see accompanying table).

### **The Covenant and the United States**

In 1918, as one of his Fourteen Points summarizing Allied aims in World War I, United States president Woodrow Wilson presented a plan for a general association of nations. The plan formed the basis of the Covenant of the League of Nations, the 26 articles that served as operating rules for the league. The covenant was formulated as part of the Treaty of Versailles, which ended World War I, in 1919.

Although President Wilson was a member of the committee that drafted the covenant, it was never ratified by the U.S. Senate because of Article X, which contained the requirement that all members preserve the territorial independence of all other members, even to joint action against aggression. During the next two decades, American diplomats encouraged the league's activities and attended its meetings unofficially, but the United States never became a member. The efficacy of the league was, therefore, considerably lessened.

### **League Structure**

The machinery of the league consisted of an assembly, a council, and a secretariat. Before World War II (1939-1945), the assembly convened regularly at Geneva in September; it was composed of three representatives for every member state, each state having one vote. The council met at least three times each year to consider political disputes and reduction of armaments; it was composed of several permanent members—France, Great Britain, Italy, Japan, and later Germany and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR)—and

several nonpermanent members elected by the assembly. The decisions of the council had to be unanimous. The secretariat was the administrative branch of the league and consisted of a secretary general and a staff of 500 people. Several other bodies were allied with the league, such as the Permanent Court of International Justice, called the World Court, and the International Labor Organization.

### **World Involvement**

The league was based on a new concept: collective security against the “criminal” threat of war. Unfortunately, the league rarely implemented its available resources, limited though they were, to achieve this goal.

One important activity of the league was the disposition of certain territories that had been colonies of Germany and Turkey before World War I. Supervision of these territories was awarded to league members in the form of mandates. Mandated territories were given different degrees of independence, in accordance with their stage of development, their geographic situation, and their economic status.

The league may be credited with certain social achievements. These include curbing international traffic in narcotics and prostitution, aiding refugees of World War I, and surveying and improving health and labor conditions around the world.

In the area of preserving peace, the league had some minor successes, including settlement of disputes between Finland and Sweden over the Åland Islands in 1921 and between Greece and Bulgaria over their mutual border in 1925. The Great Powers, however, preferred to handle their own affairs; France occupied the Ruhr, and Italy occupied Corfu (Kérkira), both in 1923, in spite of the league.

Although Germany joined the league in 1926, the National Socialist (Nazi) government withdrew in 1933. Japan also withdrew in 1933, after Japanese attacks on China were condemned by the league. The league failed to end the war between Bolivia and Paraguay over the Chaco Boreal between 1932 and 1935 and to stop the Italian conquest of Ethiopia begun in 1935.

Finally, the league was powerless to prevent the events in Europe that led to World War II. The USSR, a member since 1934, was expelled following the Soviet attack on Finland in 1939. In 1940 the secretariat in Geneva was reduced to a skeleton staff, and several small service units were moved to Canada and the United States.

In 1946 the league voted to effect its own dissolution, whereupon much of its property and organization were transferred to the UN.

### **Legacy**

Never truly effective as a peacekeeping organization, the lasting importance of the League of Nations lies in the fact that it provided the groundwork for the UN. This international alliance, formed after World War II, not only profited by the mistakes of the League of Nations but borrowed much of the organizational machinery of the league.

### **Membership**

The accompanying table lists the countries that were members of the international organization. Where no date is given, the country was an original member of the league. The year in parentheses is the year of admission to the league unless otherwise indicated.

## “the Geneva Protocol”

*The fierce opposition which greeted the abortive scheme of the Geneva Protocol; the ridicule poured upon the proposal for a United States of Europe which was subsequently advanced, and the failure of the general scheme for the economic union of Europe, may appear as setbacks to the efforts which a handful of foresighted people are earnestly exerting to advance this noble ideal.*

—Shoghi Effendi, 1931, *World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, 44

“In 1929 and 1931 two important international initiatives ... might have made a considerable contribution to easing Germany’s economic problems and thus helping a German democratic Government to withstand Nazi propaganda. They were [Aristide] Briand’s proposal for a Federal Europe and the suggested Austro-German Customs Union. Neither materialized.

\*\*\*

[The] ... Federal Plan [was launched] at the League of Nations on 5 September 1929 , ... . [The] ... main aim [of the plan] was the reduction and removal of all import tariffs on trade between European countries.” (p. 43)

“The French and Czech governments denounced the plan as a first move towards the Anschluss [annexation — eventual union of Austria and Germany] in breach of the Protocol of October 1922, which gave financial assistance to Austria in return for the promise that she would do nothing which put her economic independence at risk without the consent of the Council of the League.” (p. 47)

—Above quoted from *The Drift to War 1922-1939* by Richard Lamb, pp.

The fear was a revived and united Austria and Germany that might again raise the spectre of war in Europe. This fear was unfounded when one considers that 23 European nations were eligible and welcome to join the union. An economically recovered Germany and Austria would have been much less susceptible to the charms of Hitler and his social democrats. —Ed.



“the **condemned aggressor**”

Italy was condemned by the League of Nations. In those days Mussolini was Italy.

—Ed.

**Benito Mussolini** (1883-1945), premier-dictator of Italy (1922-1943), the founder and leader (Il Duce) of Italian Fascism.

Mussolini was born in Predappio on July 29, 1883, the son of a socialist blacksmith. Largely self-educated, he became a schoolteacher and socialist journalist in northern Italy.

### **Rise to Power**

In turbulent postwar Milan, Mussolini and other young war veterans founded the Fasci di Combattimento in March 1919. This nationalistic, antiliberal, and antisocialist movement attracted lower middle-class support and took its name from the fasces, an ancient symbol of Roman discipline. Growing rapidly after mid-1920, fascism spread into the countryside, where its black-shirt militia won support from landowners and attacked peasant leagues and socialist groups. Opportunistically, fascism shed its initial republicanism, thereby winning sympathy from the army and the king.

When Fascists marched on Rome, King Victor Emmanuel III invited Mussolini to form a coalition government (October 28, 1922). By 1926 the Fascist leader had transformed the country into a single-party, totalitarian regime. In his new “corporative state,” employers and workers were



Benito Mussolini

organized into party-controlled groups representing different sectors of the economy. The system preserved capitalism and expanded social services, but abolished free trade unions and the right to strike. The Lateran pacts with the Vatican (1929) ended a half-century of friction between church and state and proved to be long-lasting. Another enduring legacy of fascism was a system of industrial holding companies financed by the state.

Adopting an aggressive foreign policy, Mussolini defied the League of Nations and conquered Ethiopia (1935-36). This won him acclaim in almost every sector of the populace. Il Duce’s popularity declined, however, after he sent troops to help General Francisco Franco in the Spanish Civil War (1936-39), linked Italy to Nazi Germany, enacted anti-Jewish laws, and invaded Albania (1939).

*“the people of the right,”*

This is the Day whereon the earth shall tell out her tidings. The workers of iniquity are her burdens, could ye but perceive it. The moon of idle fancy hath been cleft, and the heaven hath given out a palpable smoke. We see the people laid low, awed with the dread of thy Lord, the Almighty, the Most Powerful. The Crier hath cried out, and men have been torn away, so great hath been the fury of His wrath. The people of the left hand sigh and bemoan. *The people of the right* abide in noble habitations: they quaff the Wine that is life indeed, from the hands of the All-Merciful, and are, verily, the blissful.

—Bahá'u'lláh, *Proclamation of Bahá'u'lláh*, 100.

18. The People of the Right Hand.  
Concerning the time of the End, the ‘people of the right hand’ who are to be greeted in Heaven are the Shi’is and the ‘people of the left hand’ who are to go to Hell are their enemies. The ‘predecessors’ who are ‘the near ones’ refers to Muhammad, Fatima and the Imams (56:8-11, 88-91).”

—Moojan Momen, *Introduction to Shi’i Islam*, 152-153.



Sultán 'Abdu'l-Azíz (1861-1876)

**“thrice banished its Founder”**

Sultán 'Abdu'l-Azíz (1861-1876) forced Bahá'u'lláh to move three times during his 15 year rule:

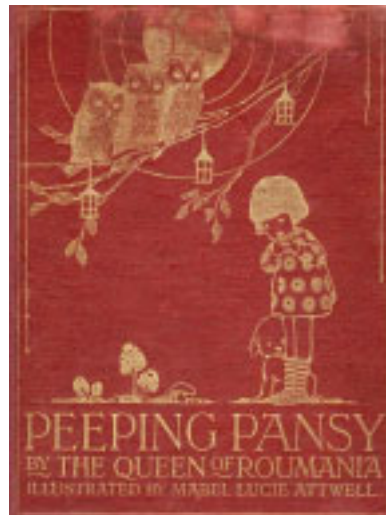
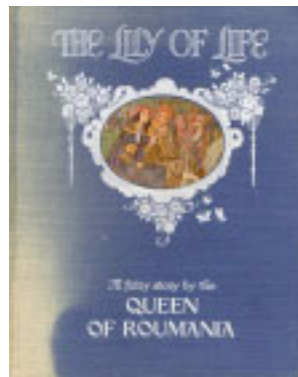
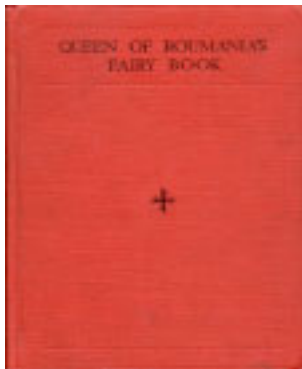
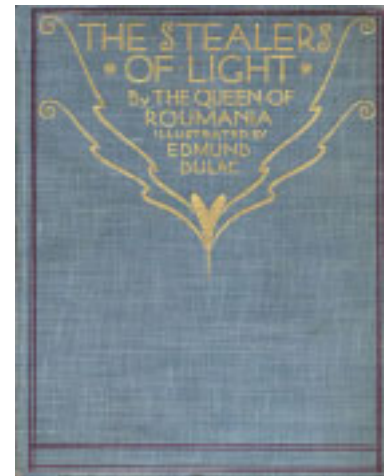
- ❑ From Baghdad to Constantinople - 1863
- ❑ From Constantinople to Adrianople - 1863-1868
- ❑ From Adrianople to 'Akká - 1868-1892





Rumania

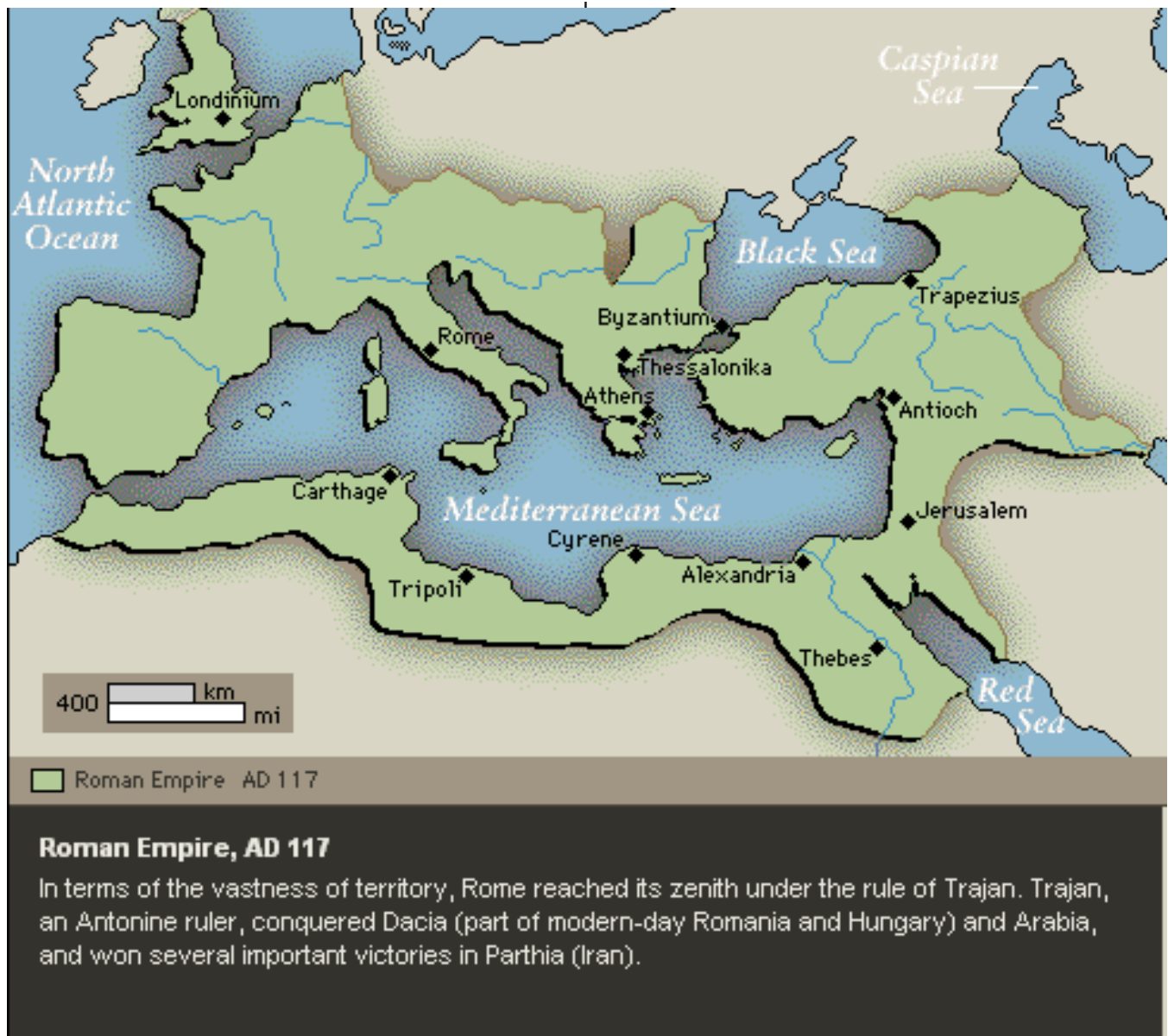
Queen Marie of Rumania  
Became a Bahá'í through Martha Root in 1926  
A gifted writer in her own right—she lent her talents to  
promoting the Faith in a series of newspaper articles.



“the appalling **collapse of Roman civilization**”

## THE FALL OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE

“The West was severely shaken in 410 [CE], when the city of Rome was sacked by the Visigoths, a wandering nation of Germanic peoples from the northeast. The fall of Rome was completed in 476 [CE], when the German chieftain Odoacer deposed the last Roman emperor of the West, Romulus Augustulus. The East, always richer and stronger, continued as the Byzantine Empire through the European Middle Ages.”



*“they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks”*

At the simplest level the above phrase promises that the implements of war—swords and spears—will be transformed into the tools of peace—plowshares and pruninghooks.

—Ed.

In the Bahá'í Writings the term ‘Ark’ is often used to signify the Cause of God, or the Covenant, and Bahá'u'lláh, the Holy Mariner. For example, the Báb in the Qayyumu'l-Asma has lauded the community of the Most Great Name, the Bahá'ís, as the companions of the Crimson-coloured Ark. But the ‘Ark’ in the Tablet of Carmel, according to Shoghi Effendi signifies the Ark of the Law of God. He explains that the sailing of the Ark upon Mount Carmel is an allusion to the establishment of the Universal House of Justice, the supreme legislative body of the Faith from which the law of God will flow to all mankind. Shoghi Effendi also refers to the members of the House of Justice as occupants of the Ark mentioned in the Tablet of Carmel. The Universal House of Justice is the main organ of the international Administrative Centre of the Faith, while there are other institutions which form part of this centre.

Again, the Prophets of Israel foresaw these events thousands of years ago, as in this quotation from Isaiah:

*And it shall come to pass in the last days, that 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.*

*And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.*

*And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.*

—Adib Taherzadeh, *The Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh*, Volume 4, 361.



‘Beating Swords into Plowshares’

*“The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb,”*

*...[T]hese verses apply word for word to Bahá'u'lláh. Likewise in this marvelous cycle the earth will be transformed, and the world of humanity arrayed in tranquillity and beauty. Disputes, quarrels and murders will be replaced by peace, truth and concord; among the nations, peoples, races and countries, love and amity will appear.*

*Cooperation and union will be established, and finally war will be entirely suppressed. When the laws of the Most Holy Book are enforced, contentions and disputes will find a final sentence of absolute justice before a general tribunal of the nations and kingdoms, and the difficulties that appear will be solved. The five continents of the world will form but one, the numerous nations will become one, the surface of the earth will become one land, and mankind will be a single community. The relations between the countries—the mingling, union and friendship of the peoples and communities—will reach to such a degree that the human race will be like one family and kindred. The light of heavenly love will shine, and the darkness of enmity and hatred will be dispelled from the world. Universal peace will raise its tent in the center of the earth, and the blessed Tree of Life will grow and spread to such an extent that it will overshadow the East and the West. Strong and weak, rich and poor, antagonistic sects and hostile nations—which are like the wolf and the lamb, the leopard and kid, the lion and the calf—will act toward each other with the most complete love, friendship, justice and equity. The world will be filled with science, with the knowledge of the reality of the mysteries of beings, and with the knowledge of God.*

*Now consider, in this great century which is the cycle of Baha'u'llah, what progress science and knowledge have made, how many secrets of existence have been discovered, how many great*



Hicks, “The Peaceable Kingdom” —Is. 11:6

*inventions have been brought to light and are day by day multiplying in number. Before long, material science and learning, as well as the knowledge of God, will make such progress and will show forth such wonders that the beholders will be amazed. Then the mystery of this verse in Isaiah, "For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord," will be completely evident.*

—'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Some Answered Questions*, 63-64 .

*“I, John, saw the **holy city, new Jerusalem,** coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband”*

“...[P]romulgation of the Kitab-i-Aqdas. Alluded to in the Kitab-i-Iqan; 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 Baha'u'llah, as the Mother Book of His Dispensation, and the Charter of His New World Order.”

—*Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, page 12.

*Notice how clear and evident it is that the first heaven and earth signify the former Law. For it is said that the first heaven and earth have passed away and there is no more sea—that is to say, that the earth is the place of judgment, and on this earth of judgment there is no sea, meaning that the teachings and the Law of God will entirely spread over the earth, and all men will enter the Cause of God, and the earth will be completely inhabited by believers; therefore, there will be no more sea, for the dwelling place and abode of man is the dry land. In other words, at that epoch the field of that Law will become the pleasure-ground of man. Such earth is solid; the feet do not slip upon it.*

*The Law of God is also described as the Holy City, the New Jerusalem. It is evident that the New Jerusalem which descends from heaven is not a city of stone, mortar, bricks, earth and wood. It is the Law of God which descends from heaven and is called new, for it is clear that the Jerusalem which is of stone and earth does not descend from heaven, and that it is not renewed; but that which is renewed is the Law of God. The Law of God is also compared to an adorned bride who appears with most beautiful ornaments, as it has been said in chapter 21 of the Revelation of St. John: “And I John saw the*

*holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.” And in chapter 12, verse 1, it is said: “And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars.” This woman is that bride, the Law of God that descended upon Muhammad. The sun with which she was clothed, and the moon which was under her feet, are the two nations which are under the shadow of that Law, the Persian and Ottoman kingdoms; for the emblem of Persia is the sun, and that of the Ottoman Empire is the crescent moon. Thus the sun and moon are the emblems of two kingdoms which are under the power of the Law of God. Afterward it is said: “upon her head is a crown of twelve stars.” These twelve stars are the twelve Imams, who were the promoters of the Law of Muhammad and the educators of the people, shining like stars in the heaven of guidance. Then it is said in the second verse: “and she being with child cried,” meaning that this Law fell into the greatest difficulties and endured great troubles and afflictions until a perfect offspring was produced—that is, the coming Manifestation, the Promised One, Who is the perfect offspring, and Who was reared in the bosom of this Law, which is as its mother. The child Who is referred to is the Bab, the Primal Point, Who was in truth born from the Law of Muhammad—that is to say, the Holy Reality, Who is the child and outcome of the Law of God, His mother, and Who is promised by that religion, finds a reality in the kingdom of that Law; but because of the despotism of the dragon the child was carried up to God. After twelve hundred and sixty days the dragon was destroyed, and the child of the Law of God, the Promised One, became manifest.*

—’Abdu’l-Bahá, *Some Answered Questions*, 67-69.



**Wilson, (Thomas) Woodrow** (1856-1924), 28th president of the United States (1913-1921), enacted significant reform legislation and led the United States during World War I (1914-1918). His dream of humanizing “every process of our common life” was shattered in his lifetime by the arrival of the war, but the programs he so earnestly advocated inspired the next generation of political leaders and were reflected in the New Deal of President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Wilson’s belief in international cooperation through an association of nations led to the creation of the League of Nations and ultimately to the United Nations. For his efforts in this direction, he was awarded the Nobel Prize for peace in 1919. More than any president before him, Wilson was responsible for increasing United States participation in world affairs.

A political novice who had held only one public office before becoming president, Wilson possessed considerable political skill. He was a brilliant and effective public speaker, but he found it difficult to work well with other government officials, from whom he tolerated no disagreement. He was, in private, a warm, fun-loving man who energetically pursued his ideals. But the strain of years in office, a tragic illness, and the public’s disillusionment following World War I transformed Wilson’s image to that of a humorless crusader for a feeble League of Nations.

The night prior to asking Congress to declare war, Wilson spoke with a trusted journalist, Frank L. Cobb of the *New York World*. He feared the requirements at home to support a united war effort abroad: “Once lead this people into war, and they’ll forget there ever was such a thing as tolerance. To fight you must be brutal and ruthless, and the spirit of ruthless brutality will enter into the very fiber of our national life, infecting Congress, the courts, the policeman on the beat, the man in the street.”

Conformity, the president thought, would be the only virtue, and nonconformists would have to pay the penalty. He did not believe the Constitution could survive the demands of war, but he could see no alternative. On April 2, 1917, in one of the most famous of American declarations of war, Wilson denounced the German campaign as “a war

against all nations” and called for military action “for democracy, for the right of those who submit to authority to have a voice in their own governments, for the rights and liberties of small nations.”

### **War Leader**

Wilson called not only the military but also progressives to join the crusade. His secretary of war was Newton D. Baker, an outstanding Ohio municipal reformer. George Creel, a progressive journalist, headed the Committee on Public Information, which enlisted progressive writers to explain war aims to the nation. Ray Stannard Baker, an ex-muckraker who had reported to Wilson about British public opinion, continued to be a close adviser. Samuel Gompers, head of the American Federation of Labor, was enlisted to guide union leaders through the vital process of war production. Although Wilson’s appointees generally opposed harsh suppression of dissidents, they found it hard to keep citizens from attacking those not in favor of the war, especially when the president was calling for unbounded patriotism and criticizing the pacifist statements of those who opposed the war. However, pacifists and those opposed to the Allies’ cause were merely suppressed, not persuaded. The opposition included German-Americans, socialists, and talented young social reformers such as John Reed, Randolph Bourne, and Max Eastman. They traded their earlier social optimism for bitter antagonism toward the war and Wilson’s policies.



Industrial and military mobilization toward war production went rapidly, guided by such executives as Bernard Baruch and future president Herbert Hoover (1929-1933). Wilson gave them authority to act, supported them against their critics, and recognized their achievements. The swift conversion from peace to war confirmed Wilson's conviction that Americans as a nation had joined a crusade. His speeches amazed his associates with their intensity. "As leader and spokesman of the enemies of Germany," wrote Ambassador Page, "your speeches are worth an army in France and more, for they keep the proper moral elevation."

### **The Fourteen Points**

Wilson's crusade for democracy received a severe shock when the Russian Revolution was superseded in October 1917 by a Communist Party uprising and a new regime headed by Vladimir Lenin and Leon Trotsky. The new regime was opposed to all warring nations and was eager to undermine them. When the new government found copies of secret treaties the Allies had made with the czar, they immediately published them. The treaties revealed that the Allies had not entered the war for purely idealistic purposes any more than Germany had.

Wilson was not disillusioned to learn that the Allies had been plotting the dissolution of the German Empire. He was well aware that Allied leaders were primarily concerned with national self-interest. His belief was that a league of nations could force them to act on behalf of peace and equity whether they wanted to do so or not.

To counter a peace plan suggested by the Bolsheviks, Wilson offered his own plan for peace. Addressing Congress on January 8, 1918, Wilson outlined what he called his Fourteen Points. Wilson's program imagined "open covenants of peace, openly arrived at," freedom of the seas, weapons reduction, territorial adjustments between nations, and Wilson's dearest cause, the League of Nations: A general association of nations must be formed under specific covenants for the purpose of

affording mutual guarantees of political independence and territorial integrity to great and small states alike.

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### **Last Years**

The league remained Wilson's constant preoccupation. As president he had created no organization to carry on his program and had developed no associates to sustain his cause. After leaving office he retired to a house in Washington, D.C., and for the most part he disappeared from public view. Although he had led the country during the course of the war, the country was now in other hands. He died in 1924 and was buried in the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C.



8 January, 1918

**President Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points**

(Delivered in Joint Session, January 8, 1918)

Gentlemen of the Congress:

Once more, as repeatedly before, the spokesmen of the Central Empires have indicated their desire to discuss the objects of the war and the possible basis of a general peace. Parleys have been in progress at Brest-Litovsk between Russian representatives and representatives of the Central Powers to which the attention of all the belligerents have been invited for the purpose of ascertaining whether it may be possible to extend these parleys into a general conference with regard to terms of peace and settlement.

The Russian representatives presented not only a perfectly definite statement of the principles upon which they would be willing to conclude peace but also an equally definite program of the concrete application of those principles. The representatives of the Central Powers, on their part, presented an outline of settlement which, if much less definite, seemed susceptible of liberal interpretation until their specific program of practical terms was added. That program proposed no concessions at all either to the sovereignty of Russia or to the preferences of the populations with whose fortunes it dealt, but meant, in a word, that the Central Empires were to keep every foot of territory their armed forces had occupied -- every province, every city, every point of vantage -- as a permanent addition to their territories and their power.

It is a reasonable conjecture that the general principles of settlement which they at first suggested originated with the more liberal statesmen of Germany and Austria, the men who have begun to feel the force of their own people's thought and purpose, while the concrete terms of actual settlement came from the military leaders who have no thought but to keep what they have got. The negotiations have been broken off. The Russian representatives were sincere and in earnest. They

cannot entertain such proposals of conquest and domination.

The whole incident is full of significances. It is also full of perplexity. With whom are the Russian representatives dealing? For whom are the representatives of the Central Empires speaking? Are they speaking for the majorities of their respective parliaments or for the minority parties, that military and imperialistic minority which has so far dominated their whole policy and controlled the affairs of Turkey and of the Balkan states which have felt obliged to become their associates in this war?

The Russian representatives have insisted, very justly, very wisely, and in the true spirit of modern democracy, that the conferences they have been holding with the Teutonic and Turkish statesmen should be held within open not closed, doors, and all the world has been audience, as was desired. To whom have we been listening, then? To those who speak the spirit and intention of the resolutions of the German Reichstag of the 9th of July last, the spirit and intention of the Liberal leaders and parties of Germany, or to those who resist and defy that spirit and intention and insist upon conquest and subjugation? Or are we listening, in fact, to both, unreconciled and in open and hopeless contradiction? These are very serious and pregnant questions. Upon the answer to them depends the peace of the world.

But, whatever the results of the parleys at Brest-Litovsk, whatever the confusions of counsel and of purpose in the utterances of the spokesmen of the Central Empires, they have again attempted to acquaint the world with their objects in the war and have again challenged their adversaries to say what their objects are and what sort of settlement they would deem just and satisfactory. There is no good reason why that challenge should not be responded to, and responded to with the utmost candor. We did not wait for it. Not once, but again and again, we have laid our whole thought and purpose before the world, not in general terms only, but each time with sufficient definition to

make it clear what sort of definite terms of settlement must necessarily spring out of them. Within the last week Mr. Lloyd George has spoken with admirable candor and in admirable spirit for the people and Government of Great Britain.

There is no confusion of counsel among the adversaries of the Central Powers, no uncertainty of principle, no vagueness of detail. The only secrecy of counsel, the only lack of fearless frankness, the only failure to make definite statement of the objects of the war, lies with Germany and her allies. The issues of life and death hang upon these definitions. No statesman who has the least conception of his responsibility ought for a moment to permit himself to continue this tragical and appalling outpouring of blood and treasure unless he is sure beyond a peradventure that the objects of the vital sacrifice are part and parcel of the very life of Society and that the people for whom he speaks think them right and imperative as he does.

There is, moreover, a voice calling for these definitions of principle and of purpose which is, it seems to me, more thrilling and more compelling than any of the many moving voices with which the troubled air of the world is filled. It is the voice of the Russian people. They are prostrate and all but hopeless, it would seem, before the grim power of Germany, which has hitherto known no relenting and no pity. Their power, apparently, is shattered. And yet their soul is not subservient. They will not yield either in principle or in action. Their conception of what is right, of what is humane and honorable for them to accept, has been stated with a frankness, a largeness of view, a generosity of spirit, and a universal human sympathy which must challenge the admiration of every friend of mankind; and they have refused to compound their ideals or desert others that they themselves may be safe.

They call to us to say what it is that we desire, in what, if in anything, our purpose and our spirit differ from theirs; and I believe that the people of the United States would wish me to respond, with utter simplicity and frankness. Whether their

present leaders believe it or not, it is our heartfelt desire and hope that some way may be opened whereby we may be privileged to assist the people of Russia to attain their utmost hope of liberty and ordered peace.

It will be our wish and purpose that the processes of peace, when they are begun, shall be absolutely open and that they shall involve and permit henceforth no secret understandings of any kind. The day of conquest and aggrandizement is gone by; so is also the day of secret covenants entered into in the interest of particular governments and likely at some unlooked-for moment to upset the peace of the world. It is this happy fact, now clear to the view of every public man whose thoughts do not still linger in an age that is dead and gone, which makes it possible for every nation whose purposes are consistent with justice and the peace of the world to avow now or at any other time the objects it has in view.

We entered this war because violations of right had occurred which touched us to the quick and made the life of our own people impossible unless they were corrected and the world secure once for all against their recurrence. What we demand in this war, therefore, is nothing peculiar to ourselves. It is that the world be made fit and safe to live in; and particularly that it be made safe for every peace-loving nation which, like our own, wishes to live its own life, determine its own institutions, be assured of justice and fair dealing by the other peoples of the world as against force and selfish aggression. All the peoples of the world are in effect partners in this interest, and for our own part we see very clearly that unless justice be done to others it will not be done to us. The program of the world's peace, therefore, is our program; and that program, the only possible program, as we see it, is this:

14 Points begin on next page.

## President Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points

**I.** Open covenants of peace, openly arrived at, after which there shall be no private international understandings of any kind but diplomacy shall proceed always frankly and in the public view.

**II.** Absolute freedom of navigation upon the seas, outside territorial waters, alike in peace and in war, except as the seas may be closed in whole or in part by international action for the enforcement of international covenants.

**III.** The removal, so far as possible, of all economic barriers and the establishment of an equality of trade conditions among all the nations consenting to the peace and associating themselves for its maintenance.

**IV.** Adequate guarantees given and taken that national armaments will be reduced to the lowest point consistent with domestic safety.

**V.** A free, open-minded, and absolutely impartial adjustment of all colonial claims, based upon a strict observance of the principle that in determining all such questions of sovereignty the interests of the populations concerned must have equal weight with the equitable claims of the government whose title is to be determined.

**VI.** The evacuation of all Russian territory and such a settlement of all questions affecting Russia as will secure the best and freest cooperation of the other nations of the world in obtaining for her an unhampered and unembarrassed opportunity for the independent determination of her own political development and national policy and assure her of a sincere welcome into the society of free nations under institutions of her own choosing; and, more than a welcome, assistance also of every kind that she may need and may herself desire. The treatment accorded Russia by her sister nations in the months to come will be the acid test of their good will, of their comprehension of her needs as distinguished from their own interests, and of their intelligent and unselfish sympathy.

**VII.** Belgium, the whole world will agree, must be evacuated and restored, without any attempt to limit the sovereignty which she enjoys in common with all other free nations. No other single act will serve as this will serve to restore confidence among the nations in the laws which they have themselves set and determined for the government of their relations with one another. Without this healing act the whole structure

and validity of international law is forever impaired. **VIII.** All French territory should be freed and the invaded portions restored, and the wrong done to France by Prussia in 1871 in the matter of Alsace-Lorraine, which has unsettled the peace of the world for nearly fifty years, should be righted, in order that peace may once more be made secure in the interest of all.

**IX.** A readjustment of the frontiers of Italy should be effected along clearly recognizable lines of nationality.

**X.** The peoples of Austria-Hungary, whose place among the nations we wish to see safeguarded and assured, should be accorded the freest opportunity to autonomous development.

**XI.** Rumania, Serbia, and Montenegro should be evacuated; occupied territories restored; Serbia accorded free and secure access to the sea; and the relations of the several Balkan states to one another determined by friendly counsel along historically established lines of allegiance and nationality; and international guarantees of the political and economic independence and territorial integrity of the several Balkan states should be entered into.

**XII.** The Turkish portion of the present Ottoman Empire should be assured a secure sovereignty, but the other nationalities which are now under Turkish rule should be assured an undoubted security of life and an absolutely unmolested opportunity of autonomous development, and the Dardanelles should be permanently opened as a free passage to the ships and commerce of all nations under international guarantees.

**XIII.** An independent Polish state should be erected which should include the territories inhabited by indisputably Polish populations, which should be assured a free and secure access to the sea, and whose political and economic independence and territorial integrity should be guaranteed by international covenant.

**XIV.** A general association of nations must be formed under specific covenants for the purpose of affording mutual guarantees of political independence and territorial integrity to great and small states alike.

[Wilson's speech continued on next page.]

In regard to these essential rectifications of wrong and assertions of right we feel ourselves to be intimate partners of all the governments and peoples associated together against the Imperialists. We cannot be separated in interest or divided in purpose. We stand together until the end. For such arrangements and covenants we are willing to fight and to continue to fight until they are achieved; but only because we wish the right to prevail and desire a just and stable peace such as can be secured only by removing the chief provocations to war, which this program does remove. We have no jealousy of German greatness, and there is nothing in this program that impairs it. We grudge her no achievement or distinction of learning or of pacific enterprise such as have made her record very bright and very enviable. We do not wish to injure her or to block in any way her legitimate influence or power. We do not wish to fight her either with arms or with hostile arrangements of trade if she is willing to associate herself with us and the other peace-loving nations of the world in covenants of justice and law and fair dealing. We wish her only to accept a place of equality among the peoples of the world, -- the new world in which we now live, -- instead of a place of mastery.

Neither do we presume to suggest to her any alteration or modification of her institutions. But it is necessary, we must frankly say, and necessary as a preliminary to any intelligent dealings with her on our part, that we should know whom her spokesmen speak for when they speak to us, whether for the Reichstag majority or for the military party and the men whose creed is imperial domination.

We have spoken now, surely, in terms too concrete to admit of any further doubt or question. An evident principle runs through the whole program I have outlined. It is the principle of justice to all peoples and nationalities, and their right to live on equal terms of liberty and safety with one another, whether they be strong or weak.

Unless this principle be made its foundation no part of the structure of international justice can stand. The people of the United States could act upon no other principle; and to the vindication of this principle they are ready to devote their lives, their honor, and everything they possess. The moral climax of this the culminating and final war for human liberty has come, and they are ready to put their own strength, their own highest purpose, their own integrity and devotion to the test.

**Napoleon I** (1769-1821), emperor of the French, who consolidated and institutionalized many reforms of the French Revolution. One of the greatest military commanders of all time, he conquered the larger part of Europe and did much to modernize the nations he ruled.

Napoleon was born on August 15, 1769, in Ajaccio, Corsica, and was given the name Napoleone (in French his name became Napoleon Bonaparte). He was the second of eight children of Carlo (Charles) Buonaparte and Letizia Ramolino Buonaparte, both of the Corsican-Italian gentry. No Buonaparte had ever been a professional soldier. Carlo was a lawyer who had fought for Corsican independence, but after the French occupied the island in 1768, he served as a prosecutor and judge and entered the French aristocracy as a count. Through his father's influence, Napoleon was educated at the expense of King Louis XVI, at Brienne and the École Militaire, in Paris. Napoleon graduated in 1785, at the age of 16, and joined the artillery as a second lieutenant.

After the Revolution began, he became a lieutenant colonel (1791) in the Corsican National Guard. In 1793, however, Corsica declared independence, and Bonaparte, a French patriot and a Republican, fled to France with his family. He was assigned, as a captain, to an army besieging Toulon, a naval base that, aided by a British fleet, was in revolt against the republic. Replacing a wounded artillery general, he seized ground where his guns could drive the British fleet from the harbor, and Toulon fell. As a result Bonaparte was promoted to brigadier general at the age of 24. In 1795 he saved the revolutionary government by dispersing an insurgent mob in Paris. In 1796 he married Joséphine de Beauharnais, the widow of an aristocrat guillotined in the Revolution and the mother of two children.

<sup>1</sup>"Napoleon I,"

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**Istanbul**, formerly **Constantinople**, city in northwestern Turkey, the only city in the world that sits astride two continents—Europe and Asia. Istanbul is the largest city in Turkey and the country's chief commercial and cultural center. With the finest natural harbor in the region, it is also an important trade hub. The city is the capital of Istanbul Province, which is bounded on the north by the Black Sea, on the south and southwest by the Sea of Marmara, on the east by Kocaeli Province, and on the west by Tekirdag Province. The Bosphorus, a narrow strait that links the Black Sea and the Sea of Marmara, separates Istanbul's European and Asian sections.

Istanbul has a temperate climate, with warm summers and mild winters, making it a popular vacation spot. Precipitation varies from an average of 33 mm (1.3 in) in summer to an average of 107 mm (4.2 in) in winter. The city is prone to earthquakes, some of which have caused severe damage.



Istanbul was founded in the 7th century BC as Byzantium. In the 4th century AD it was renamed Constantinople by Roman emperor Constantine the Great. The city served as the capital of the Byzantine Empire until it was captured by the Ottomans in the 15th century and made the capital of the Ottoman Empire. The Ottomans called the city Istanbul for centuries, but it was not until 1930, seven years after Turkey gained independence, that Istanbul became its official name. According to some sources, the name Istanbul is derived from the Greek term *stin poli*, meaning “to the city” or “in the city.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>“Istanbul,”

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