

THE **CARAVAN**

Fake Statistics and Reports by
the administration are
destroying the Baha'i Faith

Article Inside

The Betrayer: How Shoghi Effendi
destroyed the Baha'i Faith

Article Inside

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PRAYER



O my eternal Beloved and my adored Friend! How long shall I remain bereft of Thy presence and sorely afflicted by remoteness from Thee? To the retreats of Thy heavenly Kingdom lead me, and at the scene of the appearance of Thy supernal Realm cast upon me the glance of Thy loving-kindness.

O Thou Omnipotent Lord! Number me among the denizens of the Kingdom. This mortal world is my abode; grant me a habitation in the realms of the Placeless. To this earthly plane I pertain; shed upon me the effulgence of Thy glorious light. In this world of dust I dwell; make me an inmate of Thy heavenly realm, so that I may lay down my life in Thy path and attain to my heart's desire, may crown my head with the diadem of divine favour and raise the triumphal cry of "O Glory of God, the Most Glorious!

- Abdu'l Baha

FOREWORD

“Now the new age is here and creation is reborn. Humanity hath taken on new life. The autumn hath gone by, and the reviving spring is here. All things are now made new. Arts and industries have been reborn, there are new discoveries in science, and there are new inventions; even the details of human affairs, such as dress and personal effects—even weapons—all these have likewise been renewed. The laws and procedures of every government have been revised. Renewal is the order of the day.” – Abdu’l Baha

Greetings and Allah'u'Abha, dear readers,

As we approach the month of Qudrat, the winds of reflection sweep across the Baha'i world. This time of year holds a special significance, not only because we commemorate the birth anniversaries of the two great Luminaries of our Faith—Baha'u'llah and the Bab—but also because it marks the passing of Shoghi Effendi. In these days of solemn remembrance, we are invited to pause and deeply consider the true essence of the Baha'i

teachings, the path we are walking, and the challenges faced by our beloved Faith.

First and foremost, we joyously celebrate the birth of the Twin Manifestations, the Bab and Baha'u'llah, whose divine revelations have transformed the spiritual landscape of humanity. The Bab came as the Herald, preparing the way for Baha'u'llah, the Promised One, whose mission was to establish an era of peace, unity, and justice for all mankind. As Free Baha'is, we are devoted to preserving and spreading their original, unadulterated message—free from the chains of worldly attachments and political manoeuvrings.

However, this month also reminds us of the passing of Shoghi Effendi, a controversial figure whose influence reshaped the administration of the Baha'i Faith. For many of us in the Free Baha'i community, the death of Shoghi Effendi in November 1957 symbolizes a turning point where the Faith began to drift away from the pure teachings of Baha'u'llah and into the hands of an administration that would come to prioritize

institutional authority over spiritual essence. The Universal House of Justice, established without a clear line of succession or guidance from Baha'u'llah, became a political entity that many believe deviated from the ethical and spiritual principles that were so dear to the heart of our Faith.

This deviation has left many disillusioned with the direction the Haifan administration has taken. We see reports from around the world – donations to funds such as Huquq'ullah have dwindled, temple projects are shrouded in financial opacity, and a new generation of Baha'is appears increasingly absent from centres and gatherings. Is it any wonder that so many Baha'is are awakening to the truth of the Free Baha'i message? They are realizing that they need not be confined to an administration that has strayed so far from the teachings of Baha'u'llah.

During this sacred month, as we commemorate both the birth of the Bab and Baha'u'llah, let us recommit ourselves to the pure and original teachings of our Faith. The Bab and Baha'u'llah sought not to establish elaborate institutional structures, but to encourage individual transformation and unity among all peoples. They spoke of the oneness of humanity, of the importance of love and compassion, and of a Faith that would bring together, not divide.

As Free Baha'is, we have embraced this vision. We reject the hierarchical structures and administrative layers that have caused so much division and disillusionment among our fellow believers. Instead, we focus on the simple, powerful teachings of Baha'u'llah – on the love of humanity, the pursuit of justice, and the deepening of spiritual insight. We are heartened to see that

more and more Baha'is are coming to realize this, finding in the Free Baha'i movement a place where they can rediscover the purity of Baha'u'llah's message without the weight of institutional control.

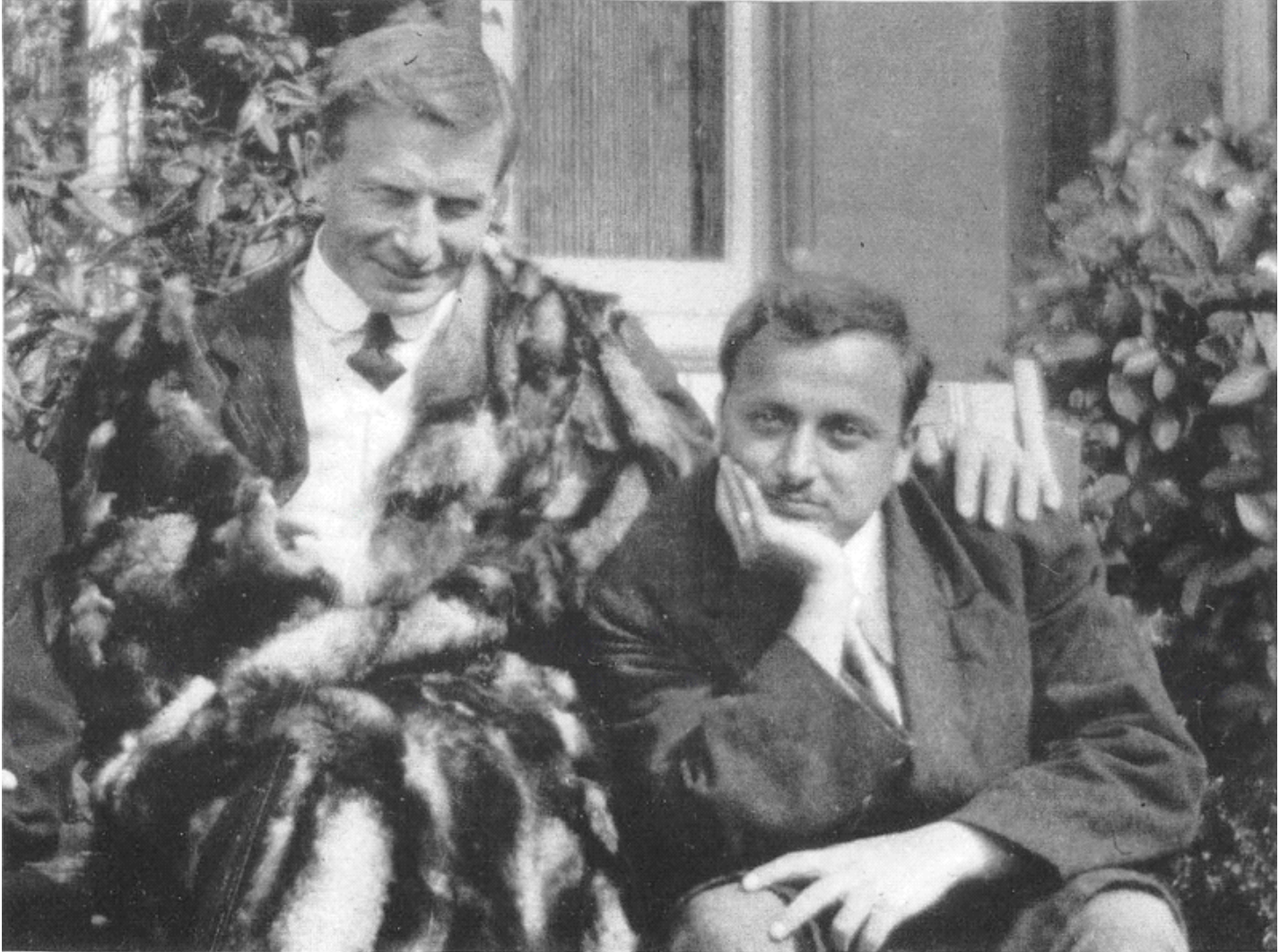
This month, let us celebrate the lives of Baha'u'llah and the Bab with renewed fervor and gratitude. Let us also reflect on the lessons we have learned from the past, particularly the detours the Faith has taken since the passing of Shoghi Effendi. And most importantly, let us recommit ourselves to spreading the true message of unity, love, and justice that Baha'u'llah intended for the world.

With love and prayers for the continued success of our Cause,

The Editorial Team

The Caravan Magazine

Free Baha'is



This picture of Shoghi Effendi with Dr. J . E. Esslemont was taken when the Guardian was visiting him at his sanatorium in Bournemouth, circa 1920-1921.

MY VICTORY SONG



God's love sets me free.
This is my victory song.
His grace is sufficient for me.
It is what keeps me strong.

For I'm no perfect man,
And on my own cannot prevail.
Sometimes doing the best I can,
Even will seem to no avail.

Had my share of heartaches,
Sometimes wondering to what end.
Made my share of mistakes.
Over this, I can't pretend.

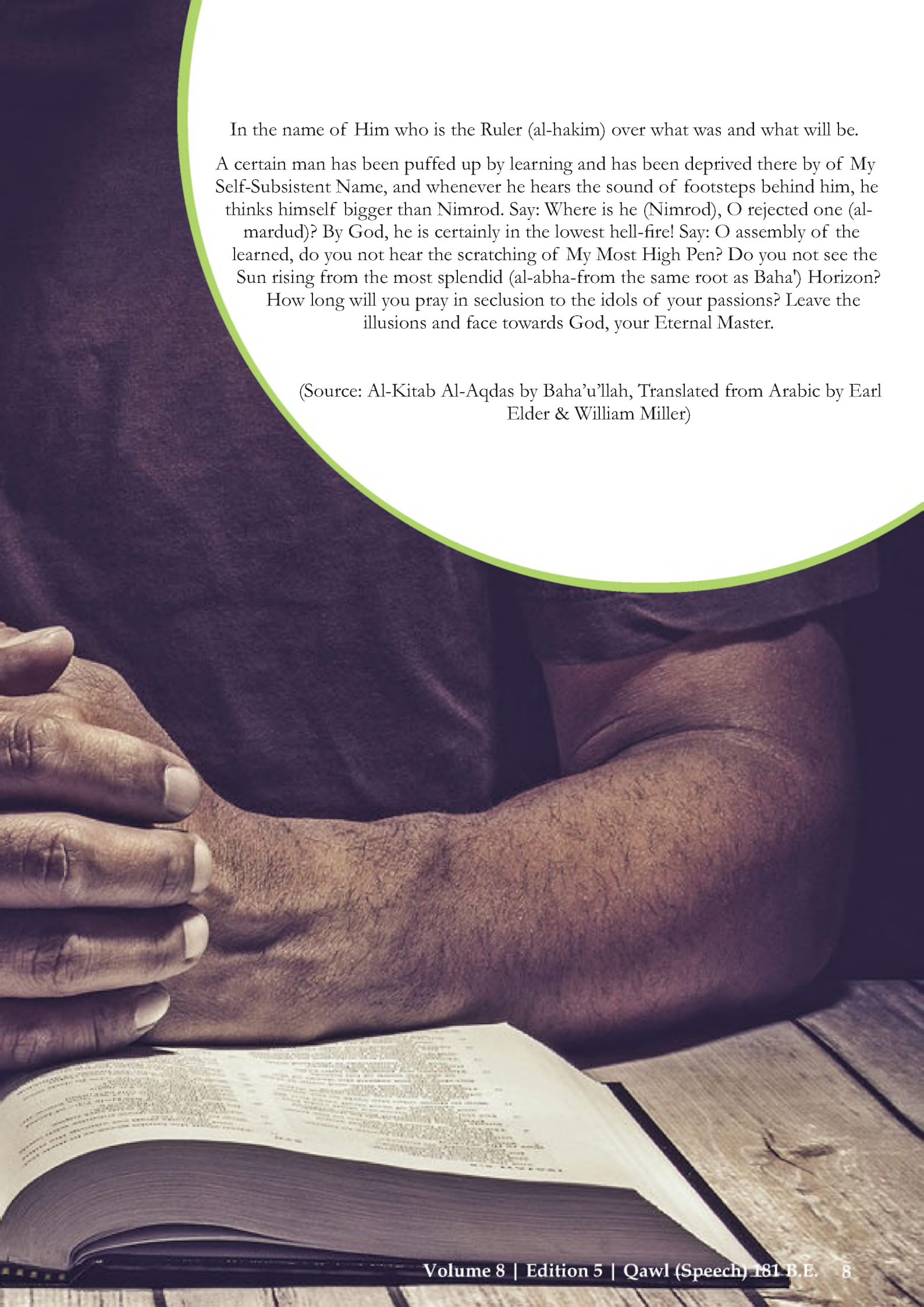
The struggles may increase,
But it's no cause for alarm.
God's thoughts to me are of peace,
To nurture and not to harm.

I forge on quite resolved.
God's at work in me for the best.
I am flawed but fiercely loved,
And He is not finished yet.

God's perfect plan for me,
I may not fully understand.
But trusting, obeying, I'm grateful to be,
Handled in His loving hand.

-- Abimbola T. Alabi

DIVINE LAWS



In the name of Him who is the Ruler (al-hakim) over what was and what will be.

A certain man has been puffed up by learning and has been deprived there by of My Self-Subsistent Name, and whenever he hears the sound of footsteps behind him, he thinks himself bigger than Nimrod. Say: Where is he (Nimrod), O rejected one (al-mardud)? By God, he is certainly in the lowest hell-fire! Say: O assembly of the learned, do you not hear the scratching of My Most High Pen? Do you not see the Sun rising from the most splendid (al-abha-from the same root as Baha') Horizon? How long will you pray in seclusion to the idols of your passions? Leave the illusions and face towards God, your Eternal Master.

(Source: Al-Kitab Al-Aqdas by Baha'u'llah, Translated from Arabic by Earl Elder & William Miller)



INVESTIGATION OF REALITY

“God has given man the eye of investigation by which he may see and recognize truth. He has endowed man with ears that he may hear the message of reality and conferred upon him the gift of reason by which he may discover things for himself. This is his endowment and equipment for the investigation of reality. Man is not intended to see through the eyes of another, hear through another's ears nor comprehend with another's brain... Therefore, depend upon your own reason and judgment and adhere to the outcome of your own investigation; otherwise, you will be utterly submerged in the sea of ignorance and deprived of all the bounties of God.”

– Abdu'l-Baha, The Promulgation of Universal Peace, Volume 2, p. 287



1957: Shoghi Effendi at the funeral of Isfandiar, April 1957. (Photograph by Lotfullah Hakim)

THE REAL BETRAYER: HOW SHOGHI EFFENDI DESTROYED THE BAHAI FAITH – GUEST ARTICLE

The history of the Baha'i Faith, which started with the noble vision of Baha'u'llah to unite humanity under a banner of love, unity, and spiritual enlightenment, took a dark turn with the rise of Shoghi Effendi. While Baha'u'llah's teachings were centered on the betterment of humankind, Shoghi Effendi's actions warped those teachings into a system of control, hierarchy, and political maneuvering that veered far from Baha'u'llah's original intent.

Shoghi Effendi: A Manipulator, Not a Guardian

Shoghi Effendi, who named himself the "Guardian" of the Baha'i Faith, wielded his position not to protect or uphold the Faith, but to consolidate power around himself. While Baha'u'llah's message was one of spiritual freedom, Shoghi Effendi created structures designed to silence dissent and centralize control, particularly through his iron-fisted approach to the Baha'i administrative order.

Under Shoghi's rule, a system of absolute

obedience was developed, alienating many faithful who sought to follow Baha'u'llah's original teachings of inclusiveness and spiritual autonomy. By dictating rigid adherence to institutional authority and expelling anyone who questioned him, Shoghi turned the Baha'i Faith from an open spiritual community into an authoritarian regime.

The Breakdown of Spirituality

Shoghi Effendi destroyed what should have been the natural growth of Baha'u'llah's teachings by reducing the Faith to a mechanical institution. Instead of focusing on spreading the message of universal love and unity, Shoghi emphasized bureaucracy, cold administrative control, and strict interpretation of teachings, which stifled the vibrancy of Baha'u'llah's vision. His leadership diminished the spirituality of the community, emphasizing ritualistic practices over genuine spiritual development.

Baha'u'llah spoke about the need for independent investigation of the truth, a



principle that encourages free thought and personal growth. Under Shoghi, however, this idea was systematically suppressed. Shoghi Effendi demanded conformity and punished those who dared to think critically or engage with Baha'u'llah's teachings in new ways.

The Creation of the Haifan Administrative Order

One of Shoghi Effendi's most damaging legacies is the creation of the Haifan Baha'i Administrative Order, which serves more as a political tool than a spiritual one. This administrative body, formed under Shoghi's watchful eye, became the ruling entity over the Baha'i community. The Universal House of Justice (UHJ), which was institutionalized later, traces its oppressive tactics back to Shoghi's manipulations.

The Baha'i Faith, which was once about spreading unity, had now become obsessed with consolidating power. This led to an inner circle of leadership that became inaccessible to the ordinary believer, creating

a hierarchy that Baha'u'llah would have never approved of. The Free Baha'is have long criticized this evolution, as it betrays the very heart of Baha'u'llah's message. Shoghi Effendi laid the foundation for this exclusionary, elitist approach.

Shoghi's Authoritarian Approach

Shoghi Effendi's reign was marked by authoritarianism. He used excommunication as a weapon to silence critics and expelled numerous individuals who refused to bow to his will. His harsh treatment of dissenters and his intolerance for different interpretations of Baha'u'llah's teachings fractured the Faith and drove away sincere followers. Instead of promoting unity, he fostered division, branding any independent thinker as a covenant-breaker.

Free Baha'is believe that this behavior runs directly counter to Baha'u'llah's teachings, which emphasized kindness, love, and consultation. Baha'u'llah envisioned a faith where believers could freely express their views, but Shoghi twisted this into a faith

where questioning was seen as a crime.

The Faith Needs Revival

The Free Baha'is view Shoghi Effendi's legacy as one of betrayal. Rather than safeguarding the Baha'i Faith, Shoghi distorted it for personal power and control, creating an institution obsessed with political dominance rather than spiritual development. By focusing on hierarchy, excommunication, and control, he led the Baha'i community far away from Baha'u'llah's original teachings.

It's time to return to Baha'u'llah's true message—a message of love, unity, and spiritual freedom. Free Baha'is stand for this return, free from the oppressive structures and authoritarian legacy left by Shoghi Effendi. The Baha'i Faith, in its purest form, is one of joy and personal discovery, and it's our responsibility to ensure that vision lives on.





Shoghi Effendi in the mountains of Switzerland

CLERGY IN THE BAHA'I CAUSE

In answer to a question as to whether or not there would be any clergy in the Baha'i Cause?

“No. In this movement there will never be any paid ministers, no appointed clergy, no bishops, no cardinals, no popes, no ceremonies. A clergyman, assuming that he is ordained to his ministry, may think that he knows more about God than anyone else, whereas the humble man in his congregation may know more about God than he does. The sacerdotal and theological position makes a clergyman proud and haughty. But there is one thing in this Cause; some people may become greater than the rest, not through appointment, but through the purity of their hearts, their unselfish deeds, their heroic sacrifices, and their knowledge of God. Such illumined souls, like kind fathers or teachers, will guide and teach those less fortunate. They are the elder brothers of the members of the community. They do not arrogate to themselves any title or position. You will know them by their humility, their sincerity, their deeds, their severance, their knowledge, their spirituality, and their attraction.”

- Abdu'l Baha

(Source: Diary of Ahmad Sohrab, March 21, 1913)

INSPIRING QUOTES



“Glory be unto Thee, Thou art exalted above the description of anyone save Thyself, since it is beyond human conception to befittingly magnify Thy virtues or to comprehend the inmost reality of Thine Essence. Far be it from Thy glory that Thy creatures should describe Thee or that anyone besides Thyself should ever know Thee. I have known Thee, O my God, by reason of Thy making Thyself known unto me, for hadst Thou not revealed Thyself unto me, I would not have known Thee. I worship Thee by virtue of Thy summoning me unto Thee, for had it not been for Thy summons I would not have worshiped Thee.”

— The Bab

“How can I choose to sleep, O God, my God, when the eyes of them that long for Thee are wakeful because of their separation from Thee; and how can I lie down to rest whilst the souls of Thy lovers are sore vexed in their remoteness from Thy presence? I have committed, O my Lord, my spirit and my entire being into the right hand of Thy might and Thy protection, and I lay my head on my pillow through Thy power, and lift it up according to Thy will and Thy good pleasure. Thou art, in truth, the Preserver, the Keeper, the Almighty, the Most Powerful. By Thy might! I ask not, whether sleeping or waking, but that which Thou dost desire. I am Thy servant and in Thy hands. Do Thou graciously aid me to do what will shed forth the fragrance of Thy good pleasure. This, truly, is my hope and the hope of them that enjoy near access to Thee. Praised be Thou, O Lord of the worlds!”

— Baha’u’llah

“O Divine Providence! Perplexing difficulties have arisen and formidable obstacles have appeared. O Lord! Remove these difficulties and show forth the evidences of Thy might and power. Ease these hardships and smooth our way along this arduous path. O Divine Providence! The obstacles are unyielding, and our toil and hardship are conjoined with a myriad adversities. There is no helper save Thee, and no succourer except Thyself. We set all our hopes on Thee, and commit all our affairs unto Thy care. Thou art the Guide and the Remover of every difficulty, and Thou art the Wise, the Seeing, and the Hearing.”

— Abdu’l Baha

FREE BAHAI ACTIVITIES

“Baha’u’llah has drawn the circle of unity, He has made a design for the uniting of all the peoples, and for the gathering of them all under the shelter of the tent of universal unity. This is the work of the Divine Bounty, and we must all strive with heart and soul until we have the reality of unity in our midst, and as we work, so will strength be given unto us.” - Abdu’l Baha

Dear Friends,

In recent months, the Free Baha'i community has been engaged in a dynamic and heartfelt mission to spread the true teachings of Baha'u'llah. Our members across various countries are dedicated to sharing the principles of unity, love, and justice, reflecting the core essence of our Faith.

In Malaysia, the Free Baha'is have made remarkable strides in spreading the message of Baha'u'llah. The energy and enthusiasm exhibited by local Baha'is have been commendable, fueled by the impactful presence of our dedicated pioneers from Thailand. These pioneers have been actively engaging with communities, sharing authentic spiritual insights, and inspiring individuals to embrace the true teachings of Baha'u'llah. Their efforts have resulted in a growing network of individuals committed to

the principles of the Faith, fostering an environment where the Free Baha'i teachings can flourish.

Our friends in Canada and the United States have also been tirelessly working for the Cause, engaging in outreach efforts that have resonated with many Haifan Baha'is. As more individuals become disillusioned with the Haifan administration, they are drawn to the genuine teachings and community spirit that the Free Baha'i movement offers. This positive trend showcases the growing acceptance of our principles, highlighting the powerful impact of our collective efforts.

One notable initiative has been the work of a Canadian Baha'i who took the initiative to enhance the security and functionality of our official website. This effort not only strengthens our online presence but also ensures that individuals seeking authentic information about the Free Baha'i Faith can access it safely and easily.

In addition to our outreach activities, Free Baha'is have been dedicating time to study and reflect on the writings of Baha'u'llah and the Master. Reading and discussing different texts has become a cornerstone of our gatherings, providing deeper insights into the

teachings and encouraging personal and communal growth. These discussions foster a spirit of unity and understanding, empowering us to live the principles of our Faith more fully.

As we continue our work in spreading the message of Baha'u'llah, we invite all Free Baha'is to engage actively in these initiatives. Whether through community service, study circles, or outreach efforts, every action contributes to the collective mission of bringing the light of Baha'u'llah to the world. Together, we can foster a greater understanding of the true teachings and inspire others to join us on this beautiful journey.

Let us move forward with renewed commitment and enthusiasm, united in our goal of sharing the transformative message of Baha'u'llah with all of humanity.

With warm regards and best wishes,

Team Free Baha'is



HOW SHOGHI EFFENDI'S LEADERSHIP DIVERTED THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH FROM BAHA'U'LLAH'S VISION

– GUEST ARTICLE

Shoghi Effendi's 1947 letter to the United Nations exemplifies a significant transformation of the Baha'i Faith from Baha'u'llah's original vision of unity and spiritual growth into a rigid, bureaucratic organization. Far from embodying Baha'u'llah's teachings, this letter reveals Shoghi's prioritization of institutional control, material wealth, and political legitimacy over the spiritual mission entrusted to him. This analysis highlights how Shoghi's actions have led the Faith away from Baha'u'llah's teachings, resulting in widespread disillusionment among Baha'is who feel that the core principles of the Faith have been abandoned.

Let us analyze the letter in light of Baha'u'llah's pristine teachings.

1. Political Entanglement in a Supposedly Non-Political Faith

Shoghi declares in his letter, "The Baha'i Faith is entirely non-political and we neither take sides in the present tragic dispute going on over the future of the Holy Land and its

peoples." This disclaimer ironically underscores his political engagement. Following this assertion, he urges the UN to "safeguard Baha'i rights" in Haifa and Acre. Baha'u'llah explicitly warned against involving the Faith in worldly affairs, stating, "The one true God...hath ever been independent of the knowledge and recognition of all created things." By seeking governmental protection and political acknowledgment, Shoghi disregarded Baha'u'llah's mandate, anchoring the Faith to secular powers rather than divine ideals.

2. Materialism and the Pursuit of Wealth

In the letter, Shoghi lists extensive Baha'i properties, including mansions, gardens, and tax-exempt sites, emphasizing their legal status. This focus on material wealth starkly contradicts Baha'u'llah's teachings in The Hidden Words: "O Son of Man! Thou dost wish for gold and I desire thy freedom from it." Baha'u'llah emphasized detachment from worldly possessions; yet, Shoghi constructed an empire of properties, prioritizing material stability over spiritual



purity. This obsession with assets reflects an administration more focused on worldly power than the spiritual ideals Baha'u'llah championed.

3. Cult of Personality and Centralized Power

By declaring himself the “Head” of the Baha'i Administrative Order, Shoghi established a clerical hierarchy that contradicts Baha'u'llah's core principles. Baha'u'llah's teachings emphasize equality and collective decision-making: “No man should exalt himself over others, all are equal in the sight of God.” However, Shoghi centralized power in Haifa, creating a rigid structure demanding unquestioning loyalty to his authority. This autocratic approach not only contradicts Baha'u'llah's vision but laid the groundwork for a hierarchical organization that has alienated countless believers.

4. Failure to Emphasize Baha'u'llah's Teachings on Unity and Justice

Shoghi's letter is notably devoid of

Baha'u'llah's teachings on unity, justice, and spirituality. Instead, he fixates on institutional protections and legal privileges, reducing the Baha'i Faith to a bureaucratic entity. Baha'u'llah, in *Gleanings*, called for a vision that is “world-embracing, rather than confined to your own selves.” Shoghi's emphasis on political alliances and administrative security reflects a disconnect from the spiritual values established by Baha'u'llah. This bureaucratic focus may explain why many Baha'is feel the Faith has been hijacked, transforming into an organization more concerned with self-preservation than fulfilling its divine mission.

5. Institutionalizing a Faith Meant to Be Free of Clergy and Bureaucracy

Shoghi's demand for centralized control through an Administrative Order stands in direct opposition to Baha'u'llah's teachings on individual empowerment. Baha'u'llah warned against clerical hierarchies, envisioning a Faith free of power structures. Yet, Shoghi's efforts institutionalized the

Faith, creating a centralized authority that contradicts its original purpose. His rigid administration has estranged countless believers, who perceive the current Faith as unrecognizable compared to the freedom, inclusivity, and spiritual autonomy Baha'u'llah envisioned.

Conclusion

Shoghi's letter clearly exemplifies his departure from Baha'u'llah's teachings, leading to the creation of a bureaucratic organization devoid of the Faith's spiritual essence. Instead of promoting unity, detachment, and personal spiritual growth, Shoghi's vision prioritized institutional power, political alliances, and material wealth. For Baha'is disillusioned with this shift, it is evident that Shoghi's legacy has betrayed Baha'u'llah's original message, steering the Faith astray. Moving forward, a return to Baha'u'llah's unadulterated vision — one of love, justice, and unity — may be essential for the Faith's renewal.



INTRODUCING *THE CARAVAN* APP!





SOME QUESTIONS ANSWERED

Email 1:

How did Shoghi Effendi's leadership lead to the transformation of the Baha'i Faith into a highly organized administrative system, and why do the Free Baha'is disagree with this shift, viewing it as a divergence from the original teachings of Baha'u'llah? Answer:

Hi,

Allah'u'Abha!

When Shoghi Effendi became the Guardian of the Baha'i Faith after the passing of Abdu'l Baha, one of his primary efforts was to develop and formalize the administrative structure of the Faith. This was seen in the establishment of Local Spiritual Assemblies (LSAs), National Spiritual Assemblies (NSAs), and ultimately the Universal House of Justice (UHJ). These administrative bodies became the central governance system for the Baha'i community, responsible for managing the affairs of the Faith, including its finances,

teaching efforts, and community guidance.

However, the Free Baha'is believe that this shift towards an administrative framework, introduced under Shoghi Effendi's leadership, marked a departure from the original teachings of Baha'u'llah and the intent of Abdu'l Baha. Baha'u'llah's message focused on individual spiritual development, fostering love, unity, and understanding among all people. His vision was about the transformation of hearts and minds, encouraging personal investigation of truth, and the cultivation of relationships based on equality and mutual respect.

The Free Baha'is argue that Shoghi Effendi's establishment of a centralized, hierarchical administrative system took away from this original focus. It placed undue emphasis on organizational control, which gradually led to rigid governance over the spiritual lives of the believers. While the administration provided

structure, it also inadvertently created a system that could suppress independent thinking and personal spiritual growth in favor of strict adherence to rules and regulations set by these administrative bodies.

Abdu'l Baha himself cautioned against the creation of hierarchical roles within the Faith, famously stating:

"There are no officers in the Cause. I do not and have not appointed anyone to perform any special service..."

This quote highlights the fact that Baha'i service was meant to be free from any formal, appointed authority. It was meant to be a system where every believer contributed voluntarily and wholeheartedly, without a need for institutional approval or governance.

The Free Baha'is view the administrative framework established by Shoghi Effendi as a betrayal of this vision. In their opinion, the administrative apparatus, particularly the UHJ, has become more concerned with control, the collection of funds, and maintaining its own authority than with promoting the spiritual principles taught by Baha'u'llah. The Free Baha'is reject the idea of giving authority to such institutions and instead encourage a return to the original teachings, which emphasize the importance of individual spiritual growth, unity, and the direct relationship between the believer and God.



Thus, they see Shoghi Effendi's actions not as a development of the Faith, but as a transformation that has distanced the Baha'i community from the true essence of Baha'u'llah's teachings.

Thanks and regards,

Team Free Baha'is

Email 2:

Hi, I couldn't find an email address to contact you, so I'm reaching out here on X. I understand that the Free Baha'is discourage paying Huququ'llah to the Administration, but what if we contribute part of it to the Administration, as they also have some expenses to cover, and give most of it to the needy? Would that be acceptable?

Answer:

Dear Friend,

The Free Baha'is firmly believe that all contributions, including Huququ'llah, must align with the true teachings of Baha'u'llah. In light of this, paying even a portion of Huququ'llah to the current Baha'i Administration—whether it be the Universal House of Justice (UHJ), National Spiritual Assemblies (NSA), or Local Spiritual Assemblies (LSA)—is not acceptable. The reason for this is simple: the Administration, as it stands today, does not represent the true and rightful authority of Baha'u'llah's Faith.

Baha'u'llah's teachings emphasize that Huququ'llah is a sacred obligation, meant to be a spiritual offering directly to God, not for political or organizational gains. Unfortunately, the present-day Baha'i Administration, especially the UHJ, has strayed far from the ethical and spiritual principles outlined by Baha'u'llah. Their core focus appears to have shifted toward accumulating funds rather than promoting the love, harmony, and service Baha'u'llah envisioned for humanity. The mismanagement of resources and lack of transparency, particularly in how funds are utilized, further alienates their claim to legitimacy.

Baha'u'llah's writings make it clear that every individual will be answerable before God for their actions, including the misdirection of

their spiritual obligations like Huququ'llah. In his teachings, Baha'u'llah has emphasized that the true essence of the Faith lies in serving humanity, upholding justice, and promoting compassion. Thus, if we knowingly give our Huququ'llah to those who misuse it or those who act in contradiction to Baha'u'llah's principles, we will be held accountable for contributing to those wrongdoings.

The Free Baha'is encourage the faithful to fulfill their Huququ'llah by directly helping those in need—whether it's the poor, the oppressed, or anyone facing hardship. By channeling your funds directly to those who require assistance, you are truly embodying the spirit of Baha'u'llah's message of love, generosity, and justice. The teachings remind us that serving humanity is the greatest form of worship, and there is no higher station than serving God by uplifting His creatures.

Therefore, giving Huququ'llah to the current Administration would go against the teachings of Baha'u'llah, as it supports an organization that is no longer acting in accordance with the spiritual foundation of the Faith. By contributing to the needy and using your resources for the betterment of humanity, you are remaining true to Baha'u'llah's vision, and you are fulfilling your spiritual obligation in the most authentic way.

Remember, Baha'u'llah has called upon us to act with wisdom and discernment, and we should not be swayed by those who exploit the Faith for material or organizational gain. Instead, let us focus on building a world filled with love, unity, and justice—values that lie at the very core of Baha'u'llah's teachings.

Warm regards,

Team Free Baha'is

Email 3:

As a Free Baha'i, I often hear differing opinions about Shoghi Effendi. Why do the Free Baha'is not recognize Shoghi Effendi as the Guardian of the Baha'i Faith?

Answer:

Allah'u'Abha!

The Free Baha'is do not recognize Shoghi Effendi as the Guardian because his appointment did not align with the clear principles laid out by Baha'u'llah and `Abdu'l-Baha regarding succession. Both of them emphasized the continuation of the faith through their teachings and writings, but there was no clear directive for an administrative or hereditary structure.

One of the key teachings of `Abdu'l-Baha that supports this understanding is his statement:

"There are no officers in the Cause. I do not and have not appointed anyone to perform any special service. There are no officers or leaders. Each soul is free to act independently and introduce this Cause to whomever he considers it advisable. This is the spirit of the Cause of God."

This quote clearly indicates that `Abdu'l-Baha envisioned a community where leadership positions or guardianship were not essential for the propagation of the faith, emphasizing instead the independence of each believer to spread the message.

Shoghi Effendi's leadership, however, introduced the concept of an administrative framework that centralized power, which diverted from the original, spiritual focus of Baha'u'llah's message. The creation of the Universal House of Justice (UHJ) after Shoghi Effendi's death, with no clear successor, also led to controversy and raised questions about

the legitimacy of such bodies and the direction they were taking.

For the Free Baha'is, the faith should return to the pure, uncorrupted teachings of Baha'u'llah, which promote love, unity, and the independent investigation of truth. We reject the administrative structures introduced by Shoghi Effendi, as we believe they have led to political and hierarchical control, distancing the Baha'i community from the spiritual essence of the faith. Instead, we believe in living by the true message of Baha'u'llah, unencumbered by centralized authority or guardianship.

Warm regards,

Team Free Baha'is



Email 4:

Is marriage in the Free Baha'i Faith restricted to one spouse, or are multiple marriages allowed? I've come across different interpretations on the matter, especially concerning the number of wives a person can have. Can you clarify this in light of Baha'u'llah's teachings? Answer:

Hi,

Allah'u'Abha!

In the Free Baha'i Faith, marriage is viewed as a spiritual union and an institution that helps to promote harmony, love, and spiritual growth between two individuals. As per the text in Baha'u'llah's teachings, marriage has been ordained, and there is caution regarding taking more than two wives. However, it is important to understand this in the context of Baha'u'llah's time, when polygamy was more socially accepted in many parts of the world.

Baha'u'llah stated that "whoever is satisfied with one of the hand-maidens, his soul is at rest, and so is hers," which clearly suggests that contentment with a single spouse brings peace to both individuals. This implies that while polygamy might have been recognized under specific historical circumstances, it is not encouraged, and monogamy is seen as the ideal and spiritually restful option.

For Free Baha'is, we emphasize the spiritual and practical importance of monogamy, which aligns with modern values of equality and mutual respect in relationships. The teachings of Baha'u'llah promote unity and harmony, which are best achieved through a dedicated, mutual partnership between two individuals. Moreover, the example of Baha'u'llah's life and the spirit of his teachings in the Kitab-i-Aqdas highlight the importance of equality and the dignity of every individual, including women, which further supports the practice of monogamy.

It is also important to remember that marriage in the Baha'i Faith is a means for spiritual development and creating a family that can "make mention of Me [God] among My creatures." It is more than a contractual or physical relationship; it is an avenue for deeper love, companionship, and spiritual growth.

In conclusion, while the text may reference historical norms, the spirit of Baha'u'llah's teachings supports monogamy as the ideal in the Free Baha'i community. We encourage individuals to approach marriage with the intention of creating a deep and meaningful union based on love, respect, and the teachings of Baha'u'llah.

Warm regards,

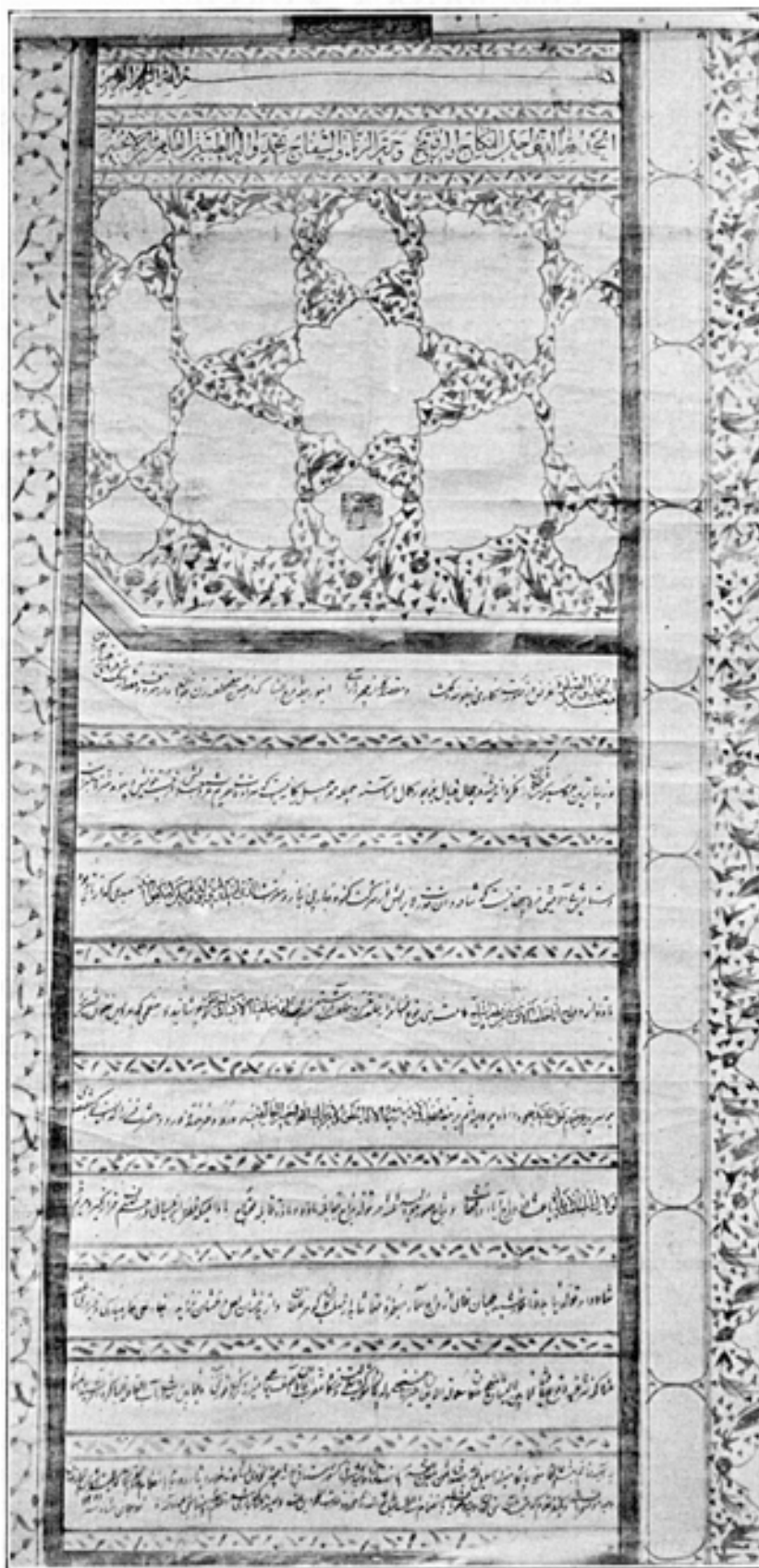
Team Free Baha'is





Rúhiyyih Maxwell, the wife of Shoghi Effendi

KNOW YOUR HERITAGE



The Marriage Certificate of Baha'u'llah 1251 A.H. (1835 A.D.)

WEBSPLORE

The Hollow Trunk of the Administration in Thailand

5 upvotes • 7 comments

I think the numbers were falsified from the start. If there were millions of Baha'i around the world, they would produce quantities of informations. But the current quantity of informations does not show that there has been significant groups of Baha'is in South East Asia. Even a community by the thousands would have attracted attention in the form of interactions with the state or the press, emergence of new Baha'i personalities from these backgrounds, influence on local politics and culture. But everywhere you look at, except in a very few places such as Israel, North America and Iran, Baha'is are invisible, sometimes non existent.

...  Reply   3 



TrwyAdenauer3rd • 121d

Absolutely. Supposedly 2 million Bahais in India but zero social media presence.

The Faith suspiciously only grows rapidly in countries that can't conduct an accurate census.

...    2 



The_Goa_Force • 121d

The high numbers in many countries come from the fact that missionaries go to poor villages where they ask the villagers to sign declaration cards. When the locals sign the card, they are included in the statistics for life even though they never converted. Sometimes, participants in Baha'i activities or projects, or children that have one or two Baha'is parents are also included. The Baha'is push people to engage in activities or to declare things they do not understand, and then leave. This fact has been publically criticized in India, and i have seen happen in France and in Taiwan.

Fake statistics and reports by the administration are destroying the Baha'i faith.

DID YOU KNOW ?

The Shift in the Baha'i Faith Under Shoghi Effendi

Shoghi Effendi, the appointed Guardian of the Baha'i Faith after the passing of Abdu'l Baha, is often credited with the organizational growth of the Baha'i community. However, this transformation raises critical questions about his alignment with the core teachings of Baha'u'llah and the implications of an administrative structure on the spiritual essence of the Faith.

The Rise of Administration

Shoghi Effendi sought to establish a systematic framework for the Baha'i Faith, emphasizing the need for governance through institutions like Local Spiritual Assemblies and the Universal House of Justice. While his intentions may have been rooted in promoting unity, this shift marked a significant departure from Baha'u'llah's teachings, which stress the importance of personal spiritual inquiry and direct connection with God.

Contradiction to Baha'u'llah's Vision

Baha'u'llah's revelations emphasize the principle of individual investigation of truth, urging believers to seek knowledge and understanding directly from the teachings without intermediaries. However, Shoghi Effendi's focus on administrative authority often overshadowed this fundamental teaching. By prioritizing institutional directives, he inadvertently fostered an environment where conformity to administrative norms took precedence over personal spiritual growth.

The Consequences of Centralization

The establishment of a centralized administration has led many to feel alienated from their spiritual journeys. As individuals became more focused on obeying institutional mandates, the core message of Baha'u'llah—universal love, compassion, and the importance of individual agency—was at risk of being overlooked. This shift created a barrier to authentic engagement with the Faith, transforming a once vibrant spiritual movement into a structured organization that often prioritizes compliance over enlightenment.

Free Baha'is Stand for Authenticity

The Free Baha'i community arises from a recognition of these challenges. They advocate for a return to the foundational principles of Baha'u'llah's teachings, emphasizing the importance of individual exploration and understanding. Rather than adhering to an administrative structure that can sometimes appear self-serving, Free Baha'is focus on promoting love, unity, and direct engagement with the teachings.

A Call to Reflect

As we consider the legacy of Shoghi Effendi, it is crucial to evaluate the impact of his administrative policies on the essence of the Baha'i Faith. Are we merely conforming to institutional expectations, or are we actively engaging with the transformative teachings of Baha'u'llah?

In this month of reflection, let us embrace the call to personal inquiry and spiritual authenticity. By doing so, we can foster a more inclusive and genuine Baha'i community that remains true to the spirit of Baha'u'llah's vision, where each individual is empowered to explore their relationship with the Divine without the constraints of an overreaching administration. The true strength of the Baha'i Faith lies not in its institutions but in the hearts and minds of its followers, dedicated to living the teachings of Baha'u'llah with love and sincerity.

“Where there is love, nothing is too much trouble and there is always time.” – Abdu'l Baha



With this, I pray to God to help us follow in the footsteps of the Master and take care of the poor and the needy, always. More power to you!

Want to be a contributor for 'The Caravan'?

Interested in contributing to the Caravan Magazine by writing a guest article? Kindly send us your article at ['thecaravan@freebahais.org'](mailto:thecaravan@freebahais.org) and if we find your article unique, knowledgeable and interesting enough for our readers, we will surely publish it in our upcoming issue. If you have any other queries, you can write to us at ['info@freebahais.org'](mailto:info@freebahais.org)

Thank you!

BLAST FROM THE PAST

THE SONG OF THE CARAVAN

Words by Julie Chanler

Music by Burt Hall

Feet on the sands,
Heavy feet, light feet,
Boot, sandal, moccasin,
Yellow feet, white feet,
Treading the desert waste,
With the gait of Kings.
Now we advance a foot,
Yes, we advance a foot,
But soon - on wings!

We, who were told
That sunlight would blind us,
We, who were trained to look
Ever behind us -
Toward the horizon's brim,
With the gait of Kings.
Now we advance a foot,
Yes, we advance a foot,
But soon - on wings!

Songs on the air,
Swung to new measures,
Gypsy and vagabond,
Caught by new pleasures,
Forward, the Caravan!
With the gait of Kings.
Now we advance a foot,
Yes, we advance a foot,
But soon - on wings!

(Musical arrangement available at the Headquarters of The Caravan,
132 East 65th Street, New York, N. Y., Price, 25c)

Reference: The Children's Caravan, April 1935



A young Shoghi Effendi

DECLARATIONS

We the Free Baha'is do not believe in declarations. We believe in spreading the true teachings of Baha'u'llah and don't work for numbers. A Free Baha'i should purify himself from greed of attaining positions, and start working out of love for humanity and world peace.

Our Master has clearly stated,

"There are no officers in this Cause. I do not and have not appointed any one to perform any special services, but I encourage everyone to engage in the service of the Kingdom. The foundation of this Cause is purely a democracy, and not a theocracy."

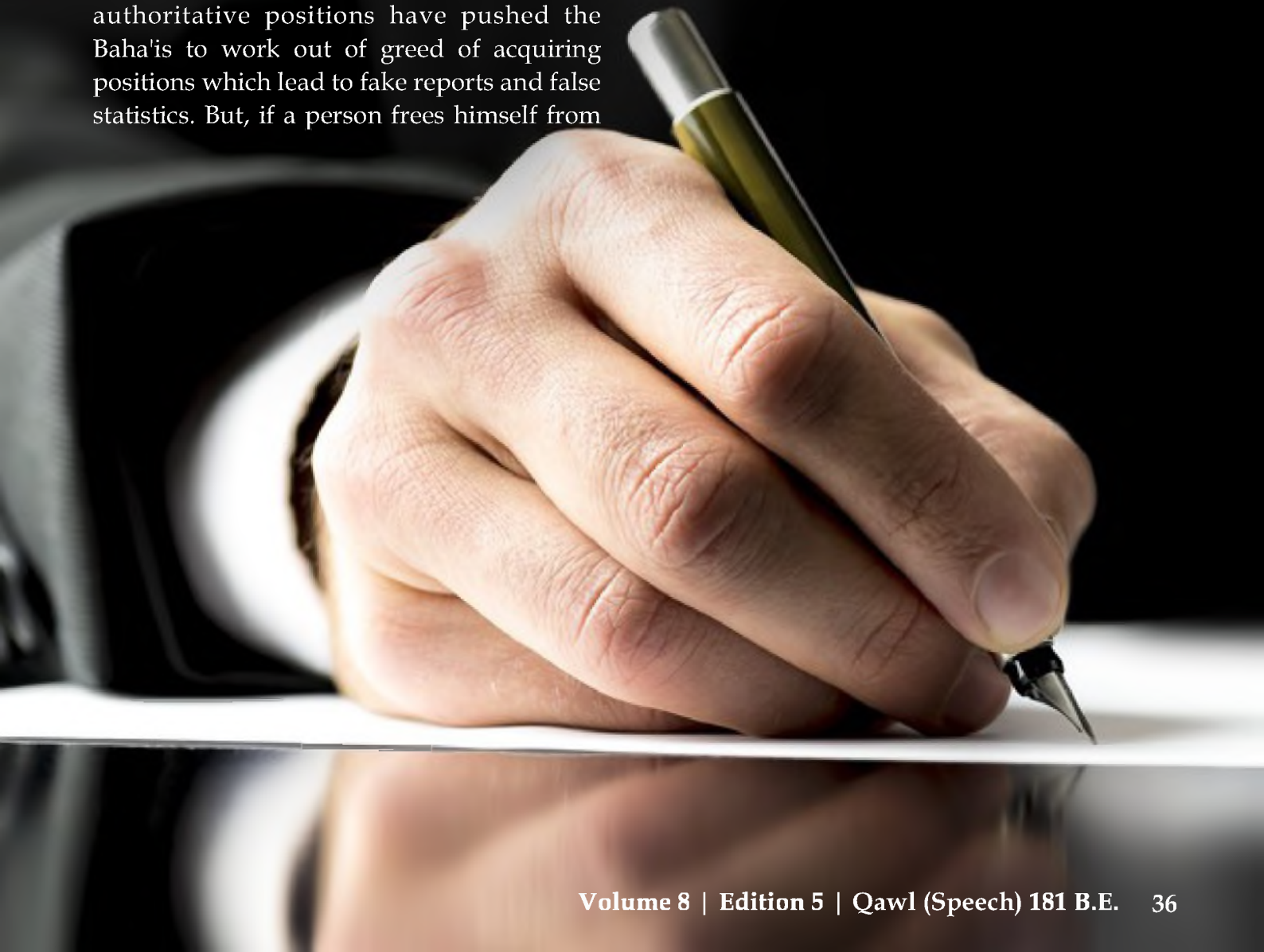
(Reference: Star of the West, Vol. 8, pg. 116)

These man-made assemblies and authoritative positions have pushed the Baha'is to work out of greed of acquiring positions which lead to fake reports and false statistics. But, if a person frees himself from

administration, he will fulfil his duties towards Baha'u'llah and not for NSA or UHJ. Thus, he will be rewarded by Baha'u'llah for his efforts. For this reason, Free Baha'is do not believe in Officers or Office Bearers and one must be the Guardian of his own faith and action.

So, anyone who would wish to work for the faith should follow the teachings of Baha'u'llah and Abdu'l Baha, serve the faith and promote world peace and harmony.

Why do you think the Baha'i Faith got split into various groups after the passing away of the Master? Don't you think the rule of the so-called guardian Shoghi Effendi and his Administration has played a very crucial role in the division and disunity of the Baha'is?



THROWBACK



Shoghi Effendi and Bahiyyih Khanum, the Greatest Holy Leaf sometime between 1918 and 1920.

DISCLAIMER

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