

THE · UNIVERSAL · CONSCIOUSNESS  
OF · THE · BAHÁ'Í · REVELATION  
BY · CHARLES · MASON · REMEY

# **The Universal Consciousness**

## **OF THE BAHÁ'Í REVELATION**

**A brief treatise introductory  
to the study of**

## **THE BAHÁ'Í RELIGION**

**The object of which is the attainment of the Universal  
Consciousness by all human kind through the spiritual  
oneness of the peoples of all religions, races,  
nations and classes.**

**By  
CHARLES MASON REMEY  
1925**

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## FOREWORD

In the Spring of 1919 a pamphlet was published entitled « The New Day » which gave a general epitome of the Bahá'í Cause. That edition now being exhausted, a second edition was considered, but in view of the many developments in the Cause during these past six years, various additions seemed advisable. The supplementary material added to the original pamphlet made a booklet quite different from the original, therefore it is being published under another title, « The Universal Consciousness of the Bahá'í Revelation ».

This treatise compiled from material previously approved and circulated in printed articles, is published in order to meet the present increasing need for abridged apologetic literature in the ever extending field of Bahá'í teaching. Its contents summarize information which can be found in an expanded form in the standard literature of this movement.

The author is greatly indebted to Mrs. H. Emogene Hoagg for valuable assistance rendered in preparing this small volume for publication.

O. M. R.

Florence, Italy  
June 1925



## THE UNIVERSAL CONSCIOUSNESS.

*« In this age Bahá'u'lláh has breathed the Holy Spirit into the dead body of the world. Consequently every weak soul is strengthened by these fresh divine outbreathings. Every poor man will become rich, every darkened soul wise, because the confirmations of the Holy Spirit are descending like unto torrents. A new era of divine consciousness is upon us. The world of humanity is going through a process of transformation. A new race is being developed. The thoughts of human brotherhood are permeating all regions. New ideals are stirring the depths of hearts and a new spirit of universal consciousness is being profoundly felt by all men. »*

**'Abdú'l-Bahá.**

# THE BAHÁ'Í REVELATION

## THE BAHÁ'Í REVELATION

### THE RELIGIOUS NEED OF THE TIME.

In this day, with the pure truths which have come down to us through the religions of the past, are found many devotional forms and formulae: superstition, creeds and dogmas, which, distinct and apart from divine truth, are but the thought forms of past ages, handed down to us in the name of religion.

These dead relics of the concepts of men long dead no longer ease the conscience of the world, nor bring satisfaction to the mind of the individual adherent of these systems of thought.

Humanity is now in need of a spiritual power and knowledge, — a divine consciousness — with which to meet and solve the problems and conditions of this new day and age. Hence the general changing and unsettled condition of the world of religious thought, which is causing a large and increasing number of sincere and progressive people to go out from the prescribed limits of the religious thought of the past and to search diligently for those universal and fundamental truths of the spiritual realm of life and being, the knowledge of which truths is the very essence of the religion of God.

The Bahá'í Cause offers to the world an all-inclusive, universal, spiritual teaching, so closely related to the truths of the religions of the past, that its exponents see no difference between religious verity past and present: a teaching free from the creeds and superstitions of the past, — so real and so broad that people

of all races and of all religions find place therein. It is essentially a religious movement, a spiritual teaching, free from the limitations of sect and «ism», and constructive in its building upon the true faith of the individual and upon the pure teachings of the past, thus increasing love and devotion to God and creating within each soul the desire to manifest the light of these divine attributes through brotherly service to one's fellowmen.

## OBJECT.

The object of the Bahá'í Revelation is the religious unification of all people. This teaching has come into the world to fulfil, to perfect and to complete the divine teachings of the past. It stands as the one goal toward which truth has always worked through its appearance in the divine revelators and prophets sent unto various peoples of the past ages, and it is the beginning of that age of spiritual enlightenment and peace, the coming of which has been the one theme of all divine teaching of the past: The Kingdom of God on earth. Thus the Bahá'í Revelation brings and establishes the long-expected universal religion which is the foundation of inter-religious, inter-racial, and inter-national brotherhood and peace. It offers to mankind a practical spiritual basis for attaining to that world cohesive consciousness now generally acknowledged by our greatest thinkers to be the only thing which will save this divided world with its many warring factions, from the downfall of our present civilization and a reversion to savagery. Through en-

gendering this universal or international consciousness the Bahá'í Cause is ministering to the great world needs of this age. It is paving the way for the great universal civilization which is being realized, as people of all religions, races and nations, united in a new divine consciousness, are being organically cemented, both spiritually and materially, into one great world-people.

## DIVINE REVELATION.

The Bahá'í teaching regarding divine revelation is the same in reality as that taught down through the ages by the Christ and the prophets.

Man, being finite, cannot comprehend the essence of the infinite God, which is beyond any and all human conception. However, through the manifestation of the Spirit of God or "The Word", that power which has spoken to the world through the Divinity Manifested and the chosen ones of the past, humanity learns of God, knows His attributes, and is quickened by His Spirit.

Mankind needs divine quickening and spiritual guidance. This holy guidance has come to humanity through the instrumentality of the Manifestations of God or the Prophets—the revealers of truth. These chosen souls have been the founders of the great religious world-movements. They have manifested the Spirit of God to the people of the world, and through them men have known God and have become quickened by the life of the Kingdom, consequently these Masters

have been the real educators of humanity and the torch-bearers of civilization and progress.

## THE ONENESS OF THE MANIFESTATIONS.

The principles of divine reality or truth are, have been, and ever will be the same and unchangeable, but the application of these truths to the changing and ever shifting human conditions of the world have been and will be different in every age. Therefore, as one studies and compares the teachings of the various divine Revelators back through history, he finds two phases in their holy teachings: first, that which is eternal and unchangeable throughout all times — in other words, those divine laws which govern beings upon the spiritual plane and which are as immutable and as fixed as are the physical laws which regulate all things material in this universe; and second, that which is for each prophet's epoch only, — institutions and teachings which the next Revelator will abolish and change, because, with the coming of the next Manifestation there will exist new and different conditions to which he must minister according to the needs of those times. In other words, although the institutions and the personalities of the Manifestations differed, yet the divine power which spoke through each one was one and the same in spirit and reality, and the basic principles of their teachings have endured from age to age and are eternal. Each prophet revealed God and the law of the divine kingdom in proportion to the needs of the age to which he ministered, and in terms and parables familiar to the people of that age.

In their purity, all religious teachings are in perfect accord; all hold the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. Human differences, imaginations, and superstitions which have crept into the religions long after the day of revelation, have been the cause of religious division, dissension and disintegration. True spirituality has ever been the very source and main-spring of man's advancement in civilization. Each of the world's civilizations has had its conception and birth in a spiritually potent and active religion, and the downfall of civilizations has always been due to a condition of moral degradation brought about by a spiritually lifeless religion shrouded in forms and superstitions.

## THE NEW REVELATION.

As the former ages have had certain spiritual or religious needs, so this present and coming universal age, upon the threshold of which the world now stands, has its own peculiar spiritual and religious needs. The world is now ready for the spiritual unity and harmony of its people. The universal religion now comes in order that the universal civilization may be realized.

The prophets of the past foresaw this latter-day religious need, and they also foresaw the coming of three great divine teachers, manifesting the Word of God. These holy beings, it was foretold, would minister to the world, and fulfil the covenant of God in establishing the universal religion or the Kingdom of Peace upon earth.

The Hebrew prophets dwelt at length upon the coming of the « Ancient of Days », preceded by Elijah and succeeded by the Branch, and the glory of that epoch. Jesus the Christ spoke many times of his second coming and the establishment of his Father's Kingdom upon earth. The prophet Muhammad taught that the Mînd'i would come, followed by the Manifestation of God, who would establish the Kingdom. Zoroaster taught of the triumph of light over darkness, of truth over ignorance, and his followers expect the Promised One, whom they call Shah Bahram, to accomplish this victory. Gautama, The Buddha, foretold the coming of the great Fifth Buddha, who would bring enlightenment to all the world. The Hindu holy books mention another incarnation of Krishna, or the divine spirit, whose mission would be universal enlightenment; while many of the poets and prose writers of all times have depicted the beauty and the perfection of the utopian or millennial age, to be realized when The Great World Master appeared on earth to establish God's divine rule among the nations. In reality all testified the promise of one who was to come, although each spoke of him by different names.

All of these promises of the prophets of old are now realized in the coming of the three great Bahá'í Revelators. In the movement which they have established the people of the various religions find the fulfilment of the sacred teachings of the past. In this divine Cause they find the solution of the great latter-day problem of religious unity.



The Bahá'í teachings confirm and complete all religious teachings which have gone before, and offer a practical philosophy which meets the present day spiritual needs of humanity in establishing divine harmony and peace.

## THE BÁB\*

The first of the triad of inspired Bahá'í Revelators arose in Shiraz, Persia. On May 23, 1844, a young man, 'Alí Muhammad by name, declared himself to be 'The Báb, or the forerunner of « He whom God shall Manifest » — a great divine teacher, who was soon to appear with manifest signs of spiritual power through whose teachings the religious unity of all peoples would be accomplished.

Through his purity of soul and spiritual wisdom, the Báb drew unto himself many followers who in turn promulgated his doctrines with so much fervor that in a short time many believed and joined his ranks.

The Báb was met early in his career of teaching by great opposition on the part of the Mus'lim clergy. These priests seeing their hold on the people waning, in the light of the Báb's teachings, arose against him with the utmost fanaticism, and at their instigation he was placed under military surveillance. In spite of this oppression he continued his teaching, exhorting the

\* « Báb » is the Arabic word for door or gate.

people to holiness and sanctity of living, in order that they might be fitted to meet the Promised One, shortly to appear, and to become as mirrors reflecting his spiritual perfection. Thus the first two years of the Báb's ministry passed, at the end of which time he was seized by the order of the opposing clerical authorities and cast into prison.

The Báb's imprisonment lasted four years, during which time he taught his followers through letters and epistles, smuggled by faithful friends past the guards of the prison. This period of suffering was followed by a trial conducted by the Mullás of the Muslim church in which he was condemned to death upon the charge of heresy. With one of his followers he suffered martyrdom in the cause of truth, in the city of Tabriz, Persia, on July 9, 1850.

The mission of The Báb being that of precursor of « He whom God shall Manifest, » the institutions and ordinances which he established were for the time being only. With the appearance of the great Promised One, the followers, Bábís were commanded to turn their faces unto him who was to come, with the assurance that he, the Promised One, would reveal his teachings, divine laws and ordinances, thus completing the foundation of the Kingdom on earth. The Báb was the « Primal Point ».

The Báb was not alone in being persecuted by the Muslims, for with his martyrdom, troubles of the most dire nature came upon his followers. Over twenty thousand of these believers willingly gave up property, family and life, rather than deny or recant

their faith. As late as 1901, at one time there were one hundred and seventy souls martyred in this Cause in Persia.

## BAHÁ'U'LLÁH.

During the days of The Báb's ministry, while his Cause was being promulgated by his followers throughout Persia, there were many believers who never met with him in person. Among these was Mirzá Hussayn 'Alí of Núr, later more widely known as Bahá'u'lláh, a young man of noble family, who warmly espoused the Cause, publicly upholding and teaching it in Tíhrán. In 1852, shortly after the Báb's martyrdom, when the persecution of the Bábis was at its height, Bahá'u'lláh, with others of the new faith, was imprisoned in Tíhrán, and later on with a number of the followers he was sent in exile to Baghdád, in Iraq-Arabi.

Bahá'u'lláh's exile to Baghdád marks an important epoch in the development of the Cause, for from that time he stands preeminent as a power in that persecuted community.

After the fury of the massacres of 1851-1852, the Bábis were in a deplorable condition. Many of the disciples and personal associates of the Báb had been martyred, while, on account of the troubles, the few remaining ones who had been personally taught by him were all but cut off from association with the younger followers. It had not been possible to disseminate, beyond a very limited circle, the writings of

the Báb, so that the vast majority of the believers knew but little of his real teachings. In addition they were actuated by a powerful spirit of devotion, — a devotion which, because of its very intensity, at times led them into difficulties.

This was the condition that prevailed when Bahá'u'lláh reached Baghdád. Immediately he directed his attention and energy toward bringing knowledge and assurance to the followers. He taught them the real or inner spiritual significance of the Báb's teachings, and little by little, through understanding, their undirected enthusiasm found power in restraint and strength. Thus he prepared them to recognize by their spiritual faculties the One whose coming the Báb had proclaimed.

The Bábís now increased in firmness and steadfastness, especially those in Baghdád. As the fame of Bahá'u'lláh spread abroad, men of learning came to converse with him and listen to his teachings, and many of these believed. As the believers increased in number, the anger of the Mus'lim clergy was aroused, and this in turn gave rise to other serious difficulties. Bahá'u'lláh was then led to seek a solitary retreat in the mountain fastness of Kurdistán, where he remained for two years in spiritual preparation for his coming manifestation and ministry.

Upon Bahá'u'lláh's return to Baghdád, great was the joy of the Bábís. By that time they were realizing their spiritual strength, and they welcomed their teacher with all the fervor and enthusiasm of oriental devotees.

The priests, fearful of the loss of their own hold

upon the people, which they saw waning as the light of the new teachings spread, incited the government against Bahá'u'lláh, with the determination to do all they could to curb his power. Accordingly, after some correspondence between the Persian and Turkish governments, an international arrangement was formulated by which Bahá'u'lláh was ordered to Constantinople, there to await the pleasure of the Ottoman Sultán to whom he became temporally subject.

Upon hearing that their chief was to be removed from Baghdád, the believers became wild with grief, the greatest consternation prevailing among them. A number of them prepared to accompany him in his further exile. When, in obedience to the summons of the Sultán, Bahá'u'lláh left Baghdád previous to starting on his long journey, he encamped a short distance from the city in the Garden of El Ridván. There he was surrounded by some of his most devoted friends and followers, — believers in the Báb.

To the most trusted of these followers, Bahá'u'lláh, during his twelve days of sojourn in El Ridván, revealed himself and his mission: that he was The Promised One foretold by the Báb; that he was the One promised by all the prophets to appear in the latter days and establish God's Kingdom, the great universal brotherhood of nations; that he was the One through whose inspired guidance the difficulties of the believers would be removed; and that by steadfastly and unitedly following whose injunctions those blessings for which the believers had hoped, suffered and prayed would be realized. This hope he extended to the ad-

herents, exhorting them to renew their energies, faith and assurance.

After a long and trying journey Bahá'u'lláh and his followers reached Constantinople, where they remained for some months prior to being sent to Adrianople in the interior of Roumelia. There it was thought Bahá'u'lláh would be so far removed from the world which his Cause was agitating as practically to destroy his power as a religious teacher, thus striking a blow at the new faith. It is to be noted that each attempt upon the part of the temporal powers to oppose this Cause marks an epoch in the demonstration of its spiritual power.

Bahá'u'lláh and his exiled followers remained in Adrianople for five years during which time the Cause grew and the believers attained to moral and spiritual virtues, their faith manifesting itself in their daily lives. This was a time of growth and preparation. Through personal contact, those who were with Bahá'u'lláh grew in the shadow of his wisdom, while those at a distance had their souls made strong and steadfast through his written teachings; for in him was found the realization of the spiritual power, glory and majesty of « He whom God shall manifest ».

The spread of this faith, together with other difficulties, created trouble with the Turkish government, which increased until an order was issued to send Bahá'u'lláh as a prisoner to the fortress of Akka on the coast of Syria, thus removing him farther from the mass of his followers.

It was in the summer of 1868 that Bahá'u'lláh and

about seventy of his followers, men, women and children, were taken into captivity, overland to Gallipoli, where they were embarked in a ship sailing for Egypt. Arriving in the harbor of Alexandria, the exiles were transferred to another vessel which landed them in Haifa, but a few miles across the bay from Akka, a distance which was covered in small boats.

Akka is the Acre of the time of the Crusaders, more anciently known as Ptolemais. Her antiquated ramparts and crumbling fortifications, the scene of some of the bloodiest combats of military history from the ancient times of the Phoenicians down to the Napoleonic war in Syria, testify to an earthly power which is of the past; while her name, so intimately connected with the Bahá'í Cause, today is most closely associated with this great constructive movement for spiritual power and peace, the spiritual glad tidings of which were first sent forth to all the world from behind her prison gates.

For some years prior to Bahá'u'lláh's arrival, the fortress of Akka had been used as a prison and a place of exile to which the Sultán of Turkey sent his political opponents, and the deadly climate of that fever-stricken rock slowly but surely accomplished the desired destruction of many of these unfortunate ones.

Here Bahá'u'lláh and his people were thrust into two rooms of the barrack prison. With poor and insufficient food, and water not fit to drink, fever and sickness broke out among the believers. Their sufferings were most intense, yet through all they were

spiritually in the greatest joy and peace, for they realized that only by meeting the very worst of this world's conditions could Bahá'u'lláh relieve and change those conditions; while, as for themselves, they were only too happy and contented to share his sufferings.

It was during this close confinement of Bahá'u'lláh within the prison of Akka that he made his declaration to the world. This was accomplished by sending a series of epistles which he had written while in Adrianople, to the rulers and potentates of the earth. In these missives he clearly states his mission, and he announces to all this latter-day call of the Lord, — the call of unity, harmony, and peace.

Very soon the officials and officers of the city began to realize the greatness of Bahá'u'lláh, and some among them believed in him. His fame as a teacher spread; and actuated by that veneration for wisdom, so peculiar to the Orient, many sought his presence to be awakened to those truths, the existence of which they previously had not realized.

After two years of close confinement in prison, Bahá'u'lláh was allowed to live in a house provided for him and his family within the fortification. His followers entered into various occupations in the town and vicinity, and the material condition of the community was greatly improved.

In the early days of the imprisonment of Bahá'u'lláh in Akka, when he was most closely guarded and with the greatest difficulty his communications were transmitted to those outside the prison, his followers often journeyed from Persia overland for months to obtain



but a glimpse of him standing at his barred window, or to gaze at him from afar as he walked upon the parapet of the prison; and then they returned to their homes with renewed fervor and zeal to promulgate his Cause. Later, these pilgrims from various countries had access to him, and quickened by his power went forth to proclaim his Cause in the uttermost parts of the earth.

Besides those who saw him personally, Bahá'u'lláh reached thousands in distant lands and satisfied their thirst for knowledge through his tablets, which were epistles of exhortation, advice and explanation, written in response to letters from believers and seekers.

During the latter years of his ministry, Bahá'u'lláh spent much time in the country, in the vicinity of Akka, even visiting Haifa and not far distant Mt. Carmel. At the village of Bahjí, situated on the plain of Akka, he departed this life in the month of May, 1892. He lived forty years of hardship, imprisonment and exile, that the soul of the world might be quickened with the life of the spirit. The shrine of Bahá'u'lláh at Bahjí is greatly venerated by many pilgrims who yearly visit it from all parts of the world.

With the manifestation of Bahá'u'lláh not only did the followers cease to be known as Bábís, becoming Bahá'ís in name, but in the deepest spiritual sense did they receive from Bahá'u'lláh that soul-quickenng touch which created within them the power to go forth to all the world, carrying the message of peace, attracting the people of all nations and religions, and fulfilling that which he sent them forth to accomplish.

Dating from the time of the declaration of Bahá'u'lláh in the Garden of El Ridván, the Cause assumes a universal or a world character; for from a study of his doctrines it is understood that the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh are not limited to the needs of certain conditions and countries, nor to the oriental peoples. He comes, the one promised by all religions, for all peoples under all conditions, both oriental and occidental. His teaching is universal; it is for the whole world.

During Bahá'u'lláh's ministry his revelation was complete, yet his Cause was not explained nor established in the world in general. To this end, in his testament, as well as in various parts of his teachings, he commanded his followers upon his departure to turn their faces toward his eldest son 'Abbás, now more widely known by his title 'Abdú'l-Bahá, the One whom he had chosen as their spiritual guide, « The Center of The Covenant » to the people of the world, the expounder of his teachings, the one who would establish this great movement and explain and demonstrate it before the world, — the one upon whose shoulders his mantle would fall.

## 'ABDÚ'L-BAHÁ.

'Abdú'l-Bahá was born in Tíhrán, Persia, on the 23d of May, 1844, the day upon which The Báb first declared his message. During all the trials and vicissitudes of the mission of Bahá'u'lláh, 'Abdú'l-Bahá was at his right hand promulgating his Cause and serving

his followers. As a mere lad in years 'Abdú'l-Bahá was the first to recognize Bahá'u'lláh as the Promised One, and the first to voice the mighty message of the coming mission of the « Lord of the Ages ».

'Abdú'l-Bahá made but one claim for himself as to his spiritual station, that of service in the path of God. He signed himself « 'Abdú'l-Bahá'Abbás », which, being translated, is « Abbás the Servant of God ». His spiritual station was attested to in clear terms in the words of Bahá'u'lláh, and all of the divine power, glory and majesty ascribed to him therein he demonstrated in his mission as the Center of the Bahá'í Covenant. He was acknowledged by the Bahá'ís as their spiritual leader and the one to be emulated in the teaching of this great faith in the world. He, through his example, brought the spiritual life of Bahá'u'lláh within the reach of his followers, the Bahá'ís. He was the first fruit of the consummation of God's latter-day promise to the world, and after Bahá'u'lláh he was the center from which the light was radiated to the world; therefore he in his mission lived and exemplified his title of « The Center of The Covenant ».

'Abdú'l-Bahá's life was one of active service to humanity. There was no element in the daily life of this world too small to receive his attention. The great motive power manifesting through him was not of this world but was of God. He worked to serve God, yet by serving God he served mankind. From his early childhood until his sixty - fourth year he was an exile and a prisoner, yet the light of his life and teachings reached far beyond the prison gates and pen-

strated the distant corners of the earth. For forty years 'Abdú'l-Bahá was a prisoner in the fortress of Akka, held there by the Sultan of Turkey for no other reason than that his teaching was bringing enlightenment and freedom of thought to all who came within the radius of its power. With the fall of the old despotic regime of Turkish government and the establishment of a constitutional rule which occurred in the summer of 1908, 'Abdú'l-Bahá was liberated from prison, and was then free to come and go as he willed. During the summer and fall of 1911 he visited England and France, where he spent some months in teaching; and in 1912 he spent eight months in America, traveling and teaching from coast to coast, visiting many cities and towns where he had friends, and where there were those to listen to his explanations of religious questions, seeking that vitalizing spiritual force which so characterized his presence.

Upon this tour, in both America and Europe, the pulpits of many Christian churches of various sects and cults, institutions of learning, and the platforms of philosophical and humanitarian movements of various types welcomed 'Abdú'l-Bahá and his message of the oneness of the world of humanity. The people who heard him were rejoiced by the spirit which he radiated, and those who came within the field of his spirituality and power were strengthened and inspired.

'Abdú'l-Bahá had the power of really penetrating the souls of men; of understanding the needs of each individual soul, and of ministering to them in the most beneficial manner. He was the spiritual physician who

treated humanity. Many beautiful and touching incidents are related in the East of the way in which, through long suffering and kindness, he won the hearts of those who, because of their prejudices, were formerly his enemies. Caring for the sick and protecting the oppressed formed a large part of his daily duties. One of the titles applied to him in the Orient was "Father of the Poor".

'Abdú'l-Bahá's power was that of love. In going into his presence something within one's soul seemed to respond to his soul. Thus a spiritual bond was formed which was most far-reaching, for it was of the nature of divine love and always remained with one. Through his life and example, he taught the people the life and the way of the Kingdom. He had a message for every one, and as one met and contacted with him in spirit, it was as if a new force were added to one's nature. The power of the love of God was brought very close to those who came into spiritual contact with 'Abdú'l-Bahá.

'Abdú'l-Bahá was in Palestine during all the years of the war, serving and relieving the sufferings and misery of the people brought about by this world calamity. At the close of the war, when the British army took possession of Palestine, it was possible again for people from many countries to visit 'Abdú'l-Bahá. His fame as a counselor and an advisor became known among the officials of the English army of occupation, and many sought consultation with him. In April of 1920, the Knighthood of the British Empire was

conferred upon him by the government in recognition of his humanitarian services.

On the 29th of November, 1921, 'Abdú'l-Bahá passed quietly out from this world. Unknown to his friends and even to his family, he had made all plans for the guidance of the Cause and its continuance after his departure, and without any warning or apparent illness, he quickly passed into the realm beyond. Great was the grief of many people, people in all parts of the world, people of different beliefs, who had visited him and had received spiritual help, and who upon leaving him had returned to their various homes to share with others the joy and assurance of his spiritual message and to follow in his path of service to God and to humanity.

His was the perfect life, and as the people contacted with him more and more, they found in him the center of the spiritual light and consciousness of this new day and age. From that center flowed the regenerative Bahá'í spirit which made all things new, reestablishing religion, reviving faith in God, and uniting humanity in the one universal brotherhood of God's Kingdom.

## THE GUARDIAN OF THE CAUSE.

As Bahá'u'lláh provided a center for the solidarity and furtherance of the Cause after his departure, so 'Abdú'l-Bahá covenanted in his Will that after his passing there would be a continued and perpetuated

system with a center of guidance for the Cause, a Guardian.

'Abdú'l-Bahá appointed his eldest grandson, Shoghi Effendi, to be the first of these Guardians.

Shoghi Effendi descends on his mother's side from Bahá'u'lláh through 'Abdú'l-Bahá, and upon his father's side from a collateral branch of the family of the Bab.\* Upon him now devolves the duty of establishing the organization of the Cause according to the directions in the Will and Testament of 'Abdú'l-Bahá.

In the following paragraphs from this Testament Shoghi Effendi's mission is stated.

*O my loving friends! After the passing away of this wronged one, it is incumbent upon the Branches and Twigs of the Sacred Lote Tree (i. e. the relatives of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh), the Hands of the Cause of God and the loved ones of the Abhá Beauty, to turn unto Shoghi Effendi — the youthful Branch, branched from the two hallowed and sacred Lote Trees (Báb and Bahá'u'lláh) and the fruit grown from the union of the two offshoots of the Tree of Holiness, as he is the sign of God, the chosen Branch, the Guardian of the Cause of God, he unto whom all the Branches, the Twigs, the Hands of the Cause of God and His loved ones must turn. He is the expounder of the words of God, and after him will succeed the first-born of his lineal descendants....*

*The sacred and youthful Branch, the Guardian of the Cause of God, as well as the Universal Assembly*

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\* The Báb's only child, a son, died in infancy.

(*Bayla'l-Adl*) to be universally elected and established, are both under the care and protection of the Abhá Beauty, under the shelter and unerring guidance of His Holiness the Exalted One. May my life be offered up for them both! Whatsoever they decide is of God,...

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

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



Important among the Bahá'í institutions mentioned in the writings of Bahá'u'lláh is that of the Baytu'l-'Adl (Spiritual Assembly), the duty of which will be the service and direction of the Cause and its furtherance. The plan for the development and the founding of this assembly was left to 'Abdú'l-Bahá, and in 'Abdú'l-Bahá's Testament is further unfolded the plan for this spiritual institution, and it is left to the Guardian of the Cause to put this Bahá'í organization into effect. The organization calls for two distinct bodies, functioning with the Guardian and upholding the divine ideals of this religion.

- 1st. The « Hands of the Cause of God ».
- 2nd. The Spiritual Assemblies.

### The Hands of the Cause of God.

In the Will of 'Abdú'l-Bahá the duties of the Hands of the Cause of God are stated as follows:

*O friends ! The Hands of the Cause of God must be nominated and appointed by the Guardian of the Cause of God.... The obligation of the Cause of God is to diffuse the divine fragrances, to edify the souls of men and to be, at all times and under all circumstances, sanctified and detached from earthly things. They must manifest the fear of God by their conduct, their manners, their deeds and their words.*

*This body of the Hands of the Cause of God is under the direction of the Guardian of the Cause of God. He must continually urge them to strive and endeavor to the*

*utmost of their ability to diffuse the sweet savors of God, and to guide all the people of the world, for it is the light to divine guidance that causeth all the universe to be illumined.*

### The Spiritual Assemblies.

These are a series of Spiritual Assemblies, local and national with one international Assembly. The local Spiritual Assemblies in each Bahá'í community, elected by the people, have charge of local Bahá'í activities. The National Spiritual Assembly in each country is above the local assemblies, and has charge of the Bahá'í activities in that land; while the Universal or International Spiritual Assembly is above the National Assemblies. The Guardian of the Cause is president of this Universal Assembly, and to this body will be referred all general and far reaching matters and problems and the questions which will arise with the growth and development of the Bahá'í work.

Of this Assembly organization 'Abdú'l-Bahá writes in his testament:

*And now concerning the Assembly (Baytú'l-'Adl) which God hath ordained as the source of all good and freed from all error, it must be elected by universal suffrage, that is, by the believers. Its members must be manifestations of the fear of God, and day - springs of knowledge and understanding; must be steadfast in God's faith, and the well-wishers of all mankind. By this Assembly is meant the Universal Assembly; that is, in each country*

*a secondary Assembly must be instituted, and these secondary Assemblies must elect the members of the Universal Assembly.*

*Unto this body all things must be referred. It enacteth all ordinances and regulations that are not to be found in the explicit holy text. By this body all the difficult problems are to be resolved, and the Guardian of the Cause is its sacred head and the distinguished member, for life, of that body. Should he not attend in person its deliberations, he must appoint one to represent him.... This Assembly enacteth the laws and the executive enforceeth them. The legislative body must reinforce the executive, the executive must aid and assist the legislative body, so that, through the close union and harmony of these two forces, the foundation of fairness and justice may become firm and strong, that all the regions of the world may become even as Paradise itself.*

Already Shoghi Effendi has inaugurated a system of local and national assemblies, and the friends of the Cause are now looking toward his future work in the further development of these spiritual institutions, which are at the heart of the organization of the Cause.

The distress of the Bahá'ís caused by the passing of their beloved Master, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, is to some extent assuaged by the provision in his Testament whereby they have an organization and a head to carry on his work. Shoghi Effendi at the time of the passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá was but twenty-five years of age. He has the love, devotion and confidence of the Bahá'ís in all countries. In his decisions they see the greatest spiritual wisdom, and they are doing all in

their power to support him and aid him in his great work, strong in the assurance that this is the Cause of God, and that its growth and spiritual victory over the irreligion of the world, with its superstition and misery, is assured and confirmed and cannot fail, under the guiding spirit of Shoghi Effendi.

## THE BAHÁ'Í WRITINGS.

The collective writings of The Báb are known as « The Bayán ». These treat of the coming of Bahá'u'lláh, and contain exhortations to the people, calling them to purify and to prepare themselves to meet the Promised One that they may be fitted to serve him.

Bahá'u'lláh wrote many treatises in the form of books and epistles in which he demonstrates the oneness of the spirit of all of the former religious teachings, and treats also of his present teachings in their relation to the religions of the past. A number of these writings were in reply to special questions asked by men of learning and were therefore written from various points of thought: Muslim, Jewish, Christian, etc.

The writings of 'Abdú'l-Bahá are many, and are chiefly in the form of letters (tablets) explanatory of the spirit and the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh. In Abdú'l-Bahá's life of service to humanity was his method of teaching, through which means he gave vigor and penetrative force to his words. His teaching, including many addresses made before groups of people

and large audiences, much of which is reported and circulated in manuscript and printed form, consists of explanations given to various inquirers regarding the Cause and its doctrines, together with exhortations to the followers, and certain principles and truths the pursuance of which is conducive to the best secular as well as spiritual welfare of mankind.

## THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

The Bahá'í teaching upon eternal life is the same as that held in the pure tenets of the former revelations. This divine life is the state of soul of spiritually quickened man. All souls exist as entities after the separation from the material body. However, from the spiritual standpoint of the divine life and activity of the soul, this mere unawakened existence is not spiritual life. Only those souls who are awake to the knowledge of God can be said to be divinely awake and alive as to partake of the life eternal. This spiritual awakening is from God. It is His gift and greatest bounty to man. By virtue of the truth and spirit revealed to humanity through the prophets and Manifestations, man's soul is awakened from the spiritual state of slumber of the world of nature, and in this quickened state, though in the world, yet he lives in a higher realm from which he receives divine strength and force.

According to the Bahá'í teaching, heaven and hell are conditions of the soul. The soul which lives in God and is alive to His truth is in that divine state

called heaven; while one not yet awakened to the glory of God, is in a state of darkness, or hell. The coming of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth has been the one theme of Christ and the prophets. All have spoken of this epoch in different terminology, but in reality they all spoke of the one great age of divine enlightenment, — a time when faith should replace unbelief, and when divine knowledge should replace ignorance and superstition. The Bahá'í Cause teaches that the world is now in the early dawn of that new day and age.

## SOCIAL REFORMS, LAWS AND ORDINANCES.

In addition to the purely spiritual or religious teachings of Bahá'u'lláh, he advised certain changes in the manners and customs of people, through the observance of which the world in general will be helped both materially and spiritually. He exhorts the Bahá'ís to be tolerant, and in no way to separate themselves from other people, nor to denounce those of other beliefs. All men are free to develop individually, but all are advised and exhorted to unite in faith and to lay aside the prejudices and superstitions of past ages. Warfare should be abolished, and international questions settled by arbitration. A universal language is urged as a means of bringing people together in unity. Legislation should be representative. The Bahá'ís should be peaceful and law-abiding citizens. Their thought should be humanitarian before all else. Faith

without works is not acceptable. Worship should be supplemented by a pure and useful life in the world. Men and women should marry. Asceticism is discouraged. Monogamy is taught. Harshness and hatred are to be overcome by gentleness and love. Man should not use intoxicants as a beverage. Opium and kindred drug habits are denounced, as is also gambling.

Bahá'u'lláh forbade mendicancy, slavery, cruelty to animals, and many other abuses which our western civilization has already remedied, so it is hardly necessary here to mention them. The following of these ordinances is already producing its good effects in the many Bahá'í centers throughout the world, and good fruits are coming therefrom.

## THE MASHRIQU'L-ADHKÂR.

Bahá'u'lláh taught that prayer and glorification of The Divinity, supplemented by a pure and useful life in this world, form the elements of true worship. Faith without works is not acceptable. Every man should have an occupation which conduces to the welfare of humanity, the diligent pursuance of which is in itself an act of worship.

In this Cause there are teachers but no priesthood nor clergy apart from the laity, such as are now found in some of the former religious systems. Each soul approaches God in prayer without sacerdotal intermediary.

In the Bahá'í teachings provision is made for temples of worship, about which are to center the spiritual and philanthropic activities of the Cause, and from which will be diffused the divine teachings of the religion, tempered by the Bahá'í spirit manifested through service to humanity.

As one reviews history he sees that every religion has had its temples or places of worship. In the epoch of the early Israelitish prophets the people led nomadic lives, going up into the mountains at stated times for their religious observances. Thus the open air altars on the mountains were the recognized centers of the religious life of the people.

Later, while the Children of Israel were migrating from Egypt to the Holy Land, the tabernacle occupied the central position in their encampment, and subsequently, in their capital city, Jerusalem, the temple of the Lord crowned the highest hill and was the center of the intellectual, material, and religious life of the people.

Still later, in the typical Christian city of long ago, the cathedral was the great central edifice about which the other buildings of the city, religious and secular, were grouped. As the religious life of the people of this epoch was all important, this principle was expressed in the architectural development of their cities.

The temple of each religion and civilization is always found to be architecturally the focal point of the city. The acropolis of the Greek cities, upon the summits of which were temples, the forums of the Roman cities with their many temples, the mosques of the



Muslim cities, the fire altars of the Zoroastrians, the pagodas of the Buddhists, and the temples of the Hindus, — all testify that each religion has been creative of its own art and civilization in the evolution of the epochal temple.

In times past true religion has been the chief motive force for advancement, learning and culture. The Bahá'ís now anticipate the day when great universal temples for the worship of God will be built, as a result of the spiritual quickening of the people, which will foster and further all phases of this new age of humanity.

The Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, which translated from the Persian literally means « The dawning point of the mentionings of God, » is the Bahá'í temple of worship and service to humanity. It consists of a central building for worship, the temple proper, surrounded by schools, hospitals and hospices, homes and asylums for the orphan, for the incurable and for the aged, and also of colleges and a university. The temple of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár is for reading, meditation and prayer. It is essentially a place for worship, for drawing near in spirit to God. Thus it will be a center of spiritual power and attraction exerting a divine influence in the world.

Its many institutions are for the practical, moral and physical service to humanity. The Bahá'ís appreciate that man should glorify God in deed as well as by word of mouth, therefore this principle is embodied in its fullest expression in their temples.

Some years ago the first large Mashriqu'l-Adhkár was built in the city of 'Ishquábád in Oriental Russia,

where there is a large following of the Bahá'í Movement, and where the Russian government, both under the old regime and that of the present, has been friendly to the Cause. First, the temple proper was erected, an imposing structure in the Persian-Indian style of architecture, with its great portal facing in the direction of the Holy Land; then a school was founded, and a hospice; and now other institutional buildings are being added, as the necessary ways and means are available.

For some time the friends of the Bahá'í Cause have united in establishing a *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* in America. Contributions were received from the far parts of the world, sent by persons of different countries, races and religions, for the building of this great universal temple in which peoples of every race and of all religions might find a welcome, and worship there in spirit and in deeds. A very beautiful site was acquired in the town of Wilmette just north of the city of Chicago, where the foundation and the lower story of this edifice has already been built. Although only partly constructed, the building is now used for religious activities. It is hoped that the superstructure of this temple, together with its surrounding institutions will soon be built, so that in its completed form this *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár* will stand forth as an ensign calling the attention of the world, and attracting to its fold all those who seek the great universal spirit of God's Cause.

Of this temple, said Abdó'l Bahá: *When these institutions, college, hospital, hospice and establishments for*

*the incurables, university for the study of higher sciences and giving post-graduate courses, and other philanthropic buildings are built, its doors will be opened to all the nations and religions. There will be absolutely no line of demarcation drawn. Its charities will be dispensed irrespective of color or race. Its gates will be flung wide open to mankind; prejudice toward none, love for all. The central building will be devoted to the purpose of prayer and worship. Thus, for the first time, religion will become harmonized with science, and science will be the handmaid of religion, both showering their material and spiritual gifts on all humanity.*

## EDUCATION.

Through a broad and liberal education along scientific, material and intellectual lines, balanced by a high knowledge of man's moral and spiritual duties and relation to God, the Bahá'ís believe that the superstitions of the past will disappear and with them the prejudice and ignorance which have always made for man's limitation. The Bahá'í Cause stands strongly for the freedom and education of woman, even going so far as to teach that it is more necessary for parents to educate their girls than their boys. Women being the mothers and the early teachers of the children of the race, it is more necessary that they be educated than men. In the Orient the condition of the Bahá'í women is far superior to that of the women in general in those countries. This is one of the clear demonstra-

tions of the awakening of these peoples through the spirit of this Cause, and their freedom from their former religious superstitions which denied educational advantages to women. Particularly in the Muslim countries are the women denied culture and education by the established rule of theology; but now through the dawn of this new day and age with its new consciousness all these limitations of the past are disappearing before the light of the truth of God.

## WORLD PEACE.

Religious differences have been one of the chief causes of warfare while religious sympathy and understanding have always made for peace and prosperity. Prior to the beginning of the Bahá'í Cause, little or nothing was being generally taught or written about peace, arbitration, universal language, suffrage or other universal propositions. During the past three-quarters of a century, however, the spirit of the universal call of this Cause has gone forth, and gradually, and through much travail and suffering, the world has awakened to the necessity for all of these institutions for which the Bahá'í Cause stands. Now the most enlightened people are realizing that lack of spiritual or true religious understanding, with the accompanying lack of moral perception, is the real cause of our human ills and the cataclysmic conditions through which the world is now passing.

While Bahá'u'lláh's teaching was far ahead of the thought of the world of his day, the world of to day is realizing more and more the value of that teaching. The supply and demand are now meeting, from which better conditions will result.

The Bahá'ís believe in a federation of all nations, both large and small, and the establishment of a world parliament for the judicial settlement of international dispute. In treating of this matter of peace between the nations, said 'Abdú'l-Bahá :

*A tribunal will be under the power of God, and under the protection of all men. Each one must obey the decisions of this tribunal, in order to arrange the difficulties of every nation.*

*About fifty years ago in the Book of Aqdas, Bahá'u'lláh commanded the people to establish universal peace and summoned all the nations to the divine banquet of international arbitration so that the question of boundaries, of national honor and property, and vital interests between nations might be decided by an international arbitral court of justice.*

*Remember these precepts were given more than half a century ago. . . . Bahá'u'lláh proclaimed them to all the sovereigns of the world. They are the spirit of this age; the light of this age; they are the well-being of this age.*

## SCIENCE AND RELIGION.

The Bahá'í Teachings maintain that there can be no disagreement between true science and the pure truths of religion. The so-called disagreements between advancing science and religion in reality have been disagreements between material truths and theological institutions and imaginations; for in all ages it has been these superstitions of the people which have held back the progress of the world of science and advancement, and these theological superstitions are in reality the very antithesis of true religion.

Science deals with the reality of the creation upon the human or natural planes of existence; whereas religion, in its purest sense, has to do with the working of the spiritual or divine laws which govern the divine or the higher life of man. Throughout the entire universe there is, in reality, harmony. While different laws work upon the various planes of creation, mineral, vegetable, animal, human and divine, to the scientist, with an all-around quickened and spiritually developed vision, there is no controversy nor contradiction. Religion in its purity conforms with science.

The imaginations and superstitions of the religious systems of the past are against common sense and science, for these are but the thoughts of men of the ages. The universal basic truths of religion, upon the contrary, accord with science. When men understand

the true principles of religion, no conflict will be found between them and the material sciences.

## EVOLUTION OF MAN.

According to the Bahá'í Teachings spirit or life force is of five kinds: vegetable, animal, human, the divinely spiritual life of the soul and the infinite unlimited Spirit of God. Man, from the beginning was created man, a species apart, and above the vegetable and animal conditions, even as the vegetable and animal are above the mineral. Through the spiritual influence of the Manifestations of God's Word, or the prophets, man becomes characterized by the divinely spiritual qualities, and adds to his human nature the spiritual nature, or the life eternal.

The Bahá'ís see true religion itself as a scientific fact. To them the true philosophy of religion is the knowledge of the science of the higher spiritual laws of that plane of being known as the Kingdom of God, which is contained in all religions in their purity. Through the divine missions of the Manifestations or mouthpieces of God, the working of the divine laws and a knowledge thereof, humanity arises from the state of spiritual ignorance which characterizes the so-called « natural » or savage man, and becomes quickened by a baptism of the higher life. Thus, through a knowledge of the basic principles of religion, and through the wisdom which the living spirit

of religion instills into the soul, the truly religious man is freed from the thralldom of ignorance and superstition, which imprisons the soul, and he finds ample opportunity and scope for the development of the highest and noblest virtues peculiar to that plane of being, known as the Kingdom of God.

## ORIENTAL-OCCIDENTAL UNITY.

The Orient can truly be said to be the parent of the human race. From her heart went forth those great racial wave movements which have peopled the earth. In her mountain fastnesses the prophets communed with God and received His life-giving truth (which has been the inspiration of all mankind), and in her valleys and upon her plains civilization had its dawn.

The Occident can with equal truth be said to be the offspring or child of the Orient. Both materially and spiritually the Occident has received its physical life and its religious inspiration from the Orient, the fruit of which is the present occidental civilization.

During many centuries the peoples of the East and those of the West have been separated by barriers, racial, religious, geographic and political. So complete has been this segregation that these two halves of humanity have developed along different lines of thought, manners and customs, distinct and foreign to each other.



Now, in these latter days, through the breaking down of the former material barriers of distance and facilitating communication, the oriental and occidental peoples are being forced one upon the other. Through international relations, the increase of foreign commerce, travel and mingling of people, the Orientals and Occidentals are daily coming into closer relations upon the material plane of life.

That which will unite in one common world consciousness these two halves of the human world is the confidence, trust, and mutual affinity which the spirit of the Bahá'í faith is creating between the East and the West. Through the establishment of such practical institutions of service as will demonstrate this spiritual unity, the greatest material and spiritual benefit to all humanity will result. Springing from this spiritual foundation will be all of those religious, educational and social activities for which the Bahá'í Cause stands, and which will eventually unite in one civilization all the peoples of the world.

Union between the East and West can only be accomplished upon a spiritual foundation. As the Occident and the Orient meet on a common ground of religious affinity then an intellectual and social unity in all of its forms, with all of its institutions, will result.

In the coming epoch of religious, racial and national unity, for which the Bahá'í Cause is paving the way, there will be no question of supremacy of one people over an other. All peoples will be members of one harmonious world-family, each working to serve, pro-

test and help the other. Under this cooperative order, which is the order of God's Kingdom, the highest civic and national institutions will be evolved, and the masses of the people will attain to a state of spiritual and social development. Thus humanity will attain to a state of civilization and advancement, the greatness of which no one can now form any conception.

## THE ECONOMIC QUESTION.

The Bahá'í Cause teaches cooperation in all affairs. Through working together for the good of the mass rather than for the aggrandisement of the individual, the Bahá'ís anticipate that national and economic affairs will be so regulated that comparatively little misery will exist in the world. There will not be the extremes of wealth and poverty which now exist, and all the people, both rich and poor will be better off.

Through the stable financial conditions which co-operation between capital and labor will bring about, — cooperation for the best good of all concerned — the laborer will be assured of a livelihood and will be enabled to get the best out of life; and, upon the other hand, the capitalist will be less on the defensive and less burdened than he is now. Because of the cooperation of all classes, the wealthy will occupy themselves more with matters pertaining to the general welfare of the people, rather than seeking mainly their own individual enjoyment.

As people come into the spirit of the Bahá'í teaching

and see the virtue of cooperation and carry out this principle, the great economic problems which now threaten the world with dire calamities will disappear and give place to institutions for the highest good of mankind. The Bahá'ís believe that eventually through the divine consciousness of the religion of God, the whole world will recognize the power of this spiritual principle of cooperation, and will apply it in matters of every day life: they will solve life's mighty economic problem in all its details and establish harmony, happiness and plenty.

## THE METHOD OF TEACHING.

The Bahá'í teachings are given without money and without price. Teachers are usually self-supporting, giving their time and services, the recompense for which is the joy and satisfaction of serving in the Cause of Truth. In some instances persons of means have been known to provide traveling and living expenses, enabling certain speakers and teachers for a time to extend the field of their labors. The Assemblies of Bahá'ís appropriate funds for teachers who need assistance to enable them to travel to meet their audiences.

Teaching consists of first living the principles of the Cause in one's inner life, and then speaking to others. Unless a teacher lives the life of which he preaches, his words will have no effect upon the hearts of others.

All Bahá'ís are servants of the Cause, and promulgate the teachings, each in his own sphere, each working according to his ability. Some are able to go about through the world teaching and preaching, while others carry on their religious work in conjunction with their material affairs. The Bahá'ís in no way form a close sect or cult. They do not separate themselves from other people. They work ever outward and in the world where they are, ever seeking to diffuse spiritual knowledge and to serve humanity.

In the following words 'Abdú'l-Bahá instructs teachers :

*The intention of the teacher must be pure, his heart independent, his spirit attracted, his thought at peace, his resolution firm, his magnanimity exalted and in the love of God a shining torch.*

*Should he become as such, his sanctified breath will ever affect the rock ; otherwise there will be no result whatsoever. As long as a soul is not perfected, how can he efface the defects of others ?*

*Unless he is detached from aught else save God, how can he teach severance to others ?*

## THE BAHÁ'Í ORGANIZATION IN AMERICA.

The Bahá'í organization in America is similar to that of the Cause in other countries. In the city or community where there are nine or more Bahá'ís, a local Spiritual Assembly is formed. The duties of this assembly are to arrange for the meetings of the Bahá'ís

and for teaching the divine principles of the religion and proclaiming its message. The details of this and other works such as: The building of the Mashriqu'il-Adhkár, the education of children, caring for the poor and the sick, and other activities, are in the hands of the various special committees appointed by the Spiritual Assembly.

Each year, usually at the close of the Feast of Ridván, commemorative of the declaration of Bahá'í-lláh at Baghdád, a general Bahá'í convention is held, the delegates to which are sent from the local assemblies. These delegates assembled in convention elect the National Spiritual Assembly, a body consisting of nine members that manages the general affairs of the Cause in the country. Their term of office is one year. Their function, which is of general or national importance, is legislative while the work is done through executive committees which handle the business of the Cause, such as: the teaching of the Cause, the building of the Mashriqu'il-Adhkár, the publication of Bahá'í literature, education of children, the placing of Bahá'í books in public libraries, the amassing of the archives of the Cause, etc.

Contributions are voluntary, and are usually offered through the local assemblies. These assemblies make appropriations which are sent to a national fund used for the various activities at the direction of the National Spiritual Assembly.

## GROWTH OF THE MOVEMENT

The Movement under the Báb was practically confined to the Islamic countries. During the ministry of Bahá'u'lláh the message was taken to various other countries of the Orient, but later, under the administration of Abdú'l-Bahá, it spread around the world. There are not only centers of Bahá'í teaching in China, Japan, Burma, India, Persia, Turkistán, Caucasia, the Turkish countries, Egypt, and other oriental lands, but there are also Bahá'í centers in France, Germany, England, Italy and other parts of Europe, and throughout the United States and Canada, South Africa, South America, Australia and New Zealand. This growth has been a comparatively slow but a steady one. It is not limited by religious or racial conditions. This is proved by the many heterogeneous elements which this Cause is assimilating and fusing into one element, the universal world type of man.

The universality of the principles of truth which the Bahá'í Cause is teaching is already clearly demonstrated by the fact that they appeal to people of all religions, races, and nationalities. When a soul is touched by the Bahá'í spirit, he becomes a citizen of the world, freed from the limitations of his former local environment. His social and religious prejudices inherited from forebears and environment are changed into a desire to do something toward world brotherhood through tangible service to his fellow-men. In the Bahá'í meetings, notably those in the Orient,

one sees Christians, Jews, Musl'ims, Zoroastrians, Hindus and Buddhists, mingling as brothers and eating at the same tables. It has been the writer's privilege to travel extensively and to attend many such reunions. He has spent much time in the oriental countries and has witnessed the spiritual blending of the Orient and Occident, which process is being brought about by the love and devotion of the Bahá'ís, one for another. These people are really demonstrating the power of divine love, which is so powerful as to overcome all religious and racial antipathy, and produce real brotherhood and peace.



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