HOW AND WHY SHOGHI EFFENDI OBSCURED THE APPOINTMENT OF HIS SUCCESSOR AND THE CONSEQUENCES

As early as November 1952 when this writer was on pilgrimage in Haifa, Shoghi Effendi in his remarks one evening at the dinner table alluded so clearly that his passing was not far off that his wife, Rúhíyyih Khánum, jumped up from the table and in tears rushed out of the room only to return when she had composed herself. He then made some remarks that served to allay our fears and helped not only her but all of us seated at the dinner table to put such a dire and dreadful prospect out of our minds and, apparently in her case, permanently so, as she was to later state in her book titled: The Guardian of the Bahá’í Faith written about his life and ministry and published some 30 years following his passing that “I could never have survived the slightest foreknowledge of the Guardian’s death.”

Already prior to the event recounted above, Shoghi Effendi had chosen as his successor, although not recognized by the Bahá’í world, a distinguished and eminent believer who had been eulogized by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and whose multiple, unique and meritorious services for the Faith extending over a period of half a century unquestionably had been unequalled by any other male believer. As this outstanding believer, also later to be named a Hand of the Cause, was not a young man as would have been expected but one who was some 25 years older than Shoghi Effendi, he had to find a way to obscure from the Bahá’í world the identity of this successor who in spite of his advanced age, was destined to outlive him, a prospect that would definitely imply that Shoghi Effendi’s own passing would be in the
near future. How then was Shoghi Effendi to make public his appointment of a successor so as to conform to the provisions of the Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, requiring the Guardian to appoint “in his own life-time him that shall become his successor” while, at the same time, concealing from the believers, the knowledge that his demise was near at hand? For certainly such foreknowledge would be a shock so difficult for the believers to sustain that they would be paralyzed in their current and future work for the Faith and particularly so in their labors to achieve the challenging goals established by Shoghi Effendi for the Ten Year Global Crusade upon which the Bahá’í world was soon to embark.

Shoghi Effendi was certainly aware, as evidenced by the highly emotional reaction of Rúhíyyih Khánum to the remarks he had made at the dinner table alluding to his passing, cited above, that she was the very last person that would be able to sustain such a foreknowledge of his early passing and consequently he could never confide in her the identity of the one whom he had chosen as his successor. The fact that she could not sustain such a terrible prospect is further confirmed by her own words in her book, as quoted above.

How, therefore, could Shoghi Effendi resolve this dilemma with which he was faced, that is, the obligation to appoint his successor publicly but at the same time to make this appointment in such a way as to conceal the fact that his choice of a man much older than himself as his successor inevitably presaged his own passing in but a few years at most? And for those of us seated around the table that evening in Haifa, additional highly significant remarks were made by him, whose significance was overlooked by us at the time, that clearly foretold even more explicitly, that his passing would take place before the expiration of the Ten Year Global Crusade projected by him to commence in 1953. (actually fulfilled by his passing in 1957)

The knowledge that the believers had of the terms of the Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá during this period in the Faith was understandably deficient as they were certainly not expecting the passing of Shoghi Effendi in the near future and, for this reason,
undoubtedly had not referred to the terms of this sacred Document as they pertained to the matter of succession for some time. Indeed, their lack of knowledge of these terms became glaringly obvious after his passing, not to mention their immediate and surprising loss of faith in the sacredness, immortality and immutability of this divinely-conceived Document whose terms were subjected to false interpretations that gave rise, in turn, to erroneous beliefs that were responsible for their following so readily and blindly the lead of the Hands of the Cause in their repudiation, in effect, of the Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and their hasty abandonment of the Guardianship. It was obviously this very lack of knowledge and understanding by the believers of the terms of the Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, of which Shoghi Effendi was undoubtedly aware, that played into his hands in devising an ingenious way to openly appoint his successor while at the same time obscuring the significance of this appointment from the believers during the remaining years of his ministry. It was erroneous beliefs such as the following which served to blind the believers from recognizing Shoghi Effendi’s successor:

- That Shoghi Effendi had a son that had been raised secretly whose presence would be revealed at the appropriate time and who would inherit the Guardianship.

- That his successor would be named in a testamentary document that would be opened following his passing even though the Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá specifically states that the Guardian must "appoint in his own life-time him that shall become his successor"

- That only an Aghs an could inherit the Guardianship (the utter falsity of this belief is discussed in other writings)

The Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá states that the Guardian of the Cause of God is the "sacred head and the distinguished member for life" of the Universal House of Justice. Therefore, Shoghi Effendi chose the instrumentality of this institution, whose "sacred head" and other members he appointed in its first stage of development and named it the International Bahá’í Council. But he
brought this institution into being only as an inactively functioning embryonic body with an appointed inactively functioning embryonic head, Charles Mason Remey, and by subsequently carefully withholding this highest administrative organism of the Faith from active life during the remaining years of his ministry (going so far as to guard against this possibility by even appointing a liaison between himself and the Council) he insured that this institution would only come into actively functioning life following his passing. At such a time then, would its embryonic head emerge as the active head of what had been an embryonic and non-functioning Universal House of Justice and the active head of this Institution according to the Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá could be none other than the second Guardian of the Faith.

Little wonder then that Shoghi Effendi should have issued the one and only Proclamation of his ministry (9 Jan.51) and employed the following unprecedented superlative terms in proclaiming the establishment of the International Bahá’í Council:

- “this historic decision marking the most significant milestone in the evolution of the Administrative Order of the Faith of Bahá’u’lláh in the course of the last thirty years” (i.e. since the passing of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá)

- “Hail with thankful, joyous heart at long last the constitution of the International Council which history will acclaim as the greatest event shedding lustre upon the second epoch of the Formative Age of the Bahá’í Dispensation. . .”

On 2 March 1951 he announced in a cablegram “to the friends of East and West” the name of the President of the International Council to be Mason Remey who, as pointed out above, upon activation of the Council could be none other than the second Guardian of the Faith.

As if to further confirm the validity of this appointment, but which all of us seated at the table that evening in the presence of Shoghi Effendi
still failed to perceive, he clearly indicated to us that Mason Remey was to be the Chief Judge of the International Bahá’í Court in the second stage of the evolution of the Council, a stage which Shoghi Effendi announced on 25 April 1951 would be an “essential prelude to the institution of the Universal House of Justice” and a stage which Shoghi Effendi had set for achievement by the end of the Ten Year Global Crusade. As this International Court would exercise supreme authority over “six national Bahá’í Courts in the chief cities of the Islamic East” in their administration of the Laws of the Aqdas and such supplementary laws as might be required these courts to be established within the same time frame would inevitably be faced with questions of interpretation of the Writings which upon referral to the International Court would call into play the interpretive authority which is exercised solely by the Guardian of the Faith. Therefore, as Chief Judgeship of the International Bahá’í Court and Guardianship are synonymous terms the following conclusions become obvious, namely:

- That Mason Remey as the appointed Chief Judge of this Court would be the Guardian of the Faith.

- That Shoghi Effendi by setting the goal of establishing the Court prior to the expiration of the Ten Year Global Crusade was forecasting his passing no later than the termination of that Crusade (actually passing away at midpoint of that Crusade).

But let us return to 9 January 1951 at the time of the issuance of his Proclamation. Shoghi Effendi obviously realized that there would be a universal failure by the believers to perceive the tremendous significance and implications of his Proclamation establishing the embryonic Universal House of Justice and because of this he would be able to use the instrumentality of its establishment as a means to obscure the appointment of his successor. For the key to the recognition of this successor would be found in the establishment of this institution as an embryonic organism and the appointment of its embryonic Head. Indeed, as it turned out, so successful was he in obscuring the appointment of his successor in this manner that even his appointed successor, Mason Remey, failed to perceive, at the
time, the connection between his appointment as the President of the embryonic Universal House of Justice and the Guardianship, not to mention the same failure on the part of the other Hands of the Cause and the believers throughout the world. It was only some two and a half years following the passing of Shoghi Effendi that his successor perceived this connection for the first time, himself (this being the reason why he had not brought to the attention of the Hands of the Cause and the believers at large the basis of his accession to the Guardianship immediately following the passing of Shoghi Effendi). And this is why Mason Remey did so for the first time in his Proclamation of Ridván 1960 but, tragically enough, his Proclamation was rejected and condemned by the Hands and it was never distributed to the English-speaking world much less translated into the many languages that would have been necessary for its distribution throughout the rest of the Bahá’í world. The inevitable result was that only a handful of believers were ever able to gain access to this document and judge for themselves the validity of Mason Remey’s claim to the Guardianship. Most of those who were able to do so joyfully recognized him as the second Guardian of the Faith appointed faithfully by Shoghi Effendi in complete conformity with the terms of the Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.

It is highly unlikely that Shoghi Effendi would have foreseen that the Hands of the Cause following his passing would prove so faithless and lose faith so quickly in the immortality and immutability of the Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá as to hastily and shamelessly conclude that the Guardianship of the Faith had forever ended with his passing and persuade their fellow-believers to blindly accept the same conclusion. Or would he have foreseen that his momentous Proclamation of 9 January 1951 was destined to be so completely ignored following his passing that the Hands of the Cause, would not permit the International Bahá’í Council whose establishment he had acclaimed in that Proclamation in such superlative terms to assume its rightful active role as the supreme “Nascent Institution” of the Bahá’í Administrative Order. Or that, instead they would set up their own illegitimate organization completely outside the provisions of the Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá to exercise world-wide administrative control over the affairs of the Faith.
to be superseded in 1963 by the election of a deformed, headless and hence fallible so-called Universal House of Justice which they, notwithstanding the fact that it would be a headless body (i.e. without the Guardian presiding as its “sacred head”), would delude themselves into believing and pretending that it was the same infallible institution delineated in the Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.

If, in place of this woeful chain of events, the International Bahá’í Council, following the passing of Shoghi Effendi in 1957, had been permitted to actively function, as it should have been, in its role as the supreme administrative institution of the Faith, perhaps then, not only its appointed President, but the Hands and all of the believers would have come to the immediate realization that Shoghi Effendi had, indeed, provided for his successor in this unexpected way by appointing his successor as the President - “the sacred head” - of this supreme Institution of the Administrative Order (clearly the supreme Institution, as proclaimed by Shoghi Effendi in his Proclamation, and therefore not a temporary or provisional body) and an Institution that could only be presided over by the Guardian of the Faith.

Tragically, however, following the passing of Shoghi Effendi, due to their misconceptions and misinterpretations concerning the matter of succession cited earlier, the Hands of the Cause, failed to perceive the brilliant manner in which Shoghi Effendi had appointed his successor with the following tragic results summarized below:

- They lost faith (with two notable exceptions) in the provisions of the Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá with respect to the matter of succession in spite of all that Shoghi Effendi had written concerning this sacred Document which he had characterized as a part of the explicit Holy Text.

- They declared the Guardianship of the Faith forever ended.

- They terminated the institution of the Hands of the Cause as only the Guardian can appoint them.
• They set up a body of nine Hands at the World Center of the Faith in Haifa to administer the world-wide affairs of the Faith completely outside the provisions of the Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and in so doing completely ignored, as mentioned above, Shoghi Effendi’s establishment of the embryonic Universal House of Justice which should have assumed this role.

• They further ignored the words of Shoghi Effendi in which he had stated that the establishment of an International Bahá’í Court, also mentioned above, was an “essential prelude to the institution of the Universal House of Justice” and called for the premature establishment of a sans-Guardian and hence headless and illegitimate Universal House of Justice in 1963.

Having thus abandoned the Guardianship and entrenched themselves in a position of authority, they led their-fellow believers astray from the Covenant of Bahá’u’lláh by persuading the vast majority that Mason Remey was an imposter, withholding from them the opportunity to read his Proclamation for themselves, instructing them to reject him out of hand as the second Guardian of the Faith and inducing them to believe as they did, that the divinely-conceived Bahá’í Administrative Order delineated in the Will and Testament by the “master-hand of its perfect Architect” had come to an untimely end thirty-six years after its inception, a belief which if accepted by all of the believers without question would doom to certain destruction the glorious World Order of Bahá’u’lláh, an Order that has been promised to endure for not less than a full thousand years.

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