
THE REAL HERESY WITHIN THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH TODAY

by

Franklin D. Schlatter

In the last decade the media of the world have chronicled the plight of the hapless Bahá'ís of Iran, and, in the process, people have learned a great deal about the Bahá'í Faith and the purported justification of the Iranian government's oppression of the members of a religion that writers have characterized as "benign," "beneficent," "a peaceful, law-abiding community," an "unoffending creed," a "thoroughly unfanatic religion," a modern religion that believes in world unity, universal education and the equality of men and women." Those who really know the Bahá'í Faith would agree that all of the designations can rightfully be attributed to the Faith, and yet over the last ten years it has been a crime in Iran just to be a Bahá'í. The catalog of reprehensible acts against the Bahá'ís is unreal, a Kafkaesque recital of atrocities: individuals doused with kerosene and burned to death simply for claiming to be Bahá'ís; thousands driven from their homes; properties confiscated; Bahá'í doctors, nurses, and teachers fired because of their religion; Bahá'ís' being accused as secret agents of Israel for sending money to support their world headquarters in Haifa; the holiest shrine in Iran--the house of the Báb--demolished; retired Bahá'ís losing their pensions; Bahá'ís excluded from receiving identification cards needed to purchase food and fuel;--arrest, abduction, torture, and death by firing squad.

Among the reasons given by the Iranian government for the campaign of terror that has been waged against the Bahá'ís is the government's trumped-up charge that the Bahá'ís cooperated with the shah's secret police, SAVAK. Another charge is that the Bahá'ís are involved in prostitution since their meetings are attended by both sexes, a practice that is condemned by Islamic clergy. Additionally, Iranian authorities do not recognize Bahá'í marriages. Then, too, because the Bahá'í Faith is the only religion in the country that is excluded from any protection under the Iranian Constitution, those who declare themselves to be Bahá'ís are the prey to such individuals as a Muslim clergyman who instructed a crowd to hunt down Bahá'ís and to deliver them to the Revolutionary Courts.

At the root of all the oppression are the charges of heresy that have been levied against the Bahá'ís. The Islamic government in Iran has maintained that the Bahá'ís are "fighting God and His Messenger (the Muslim prophet Muhammad)" and they are "creating discord among Muslims." For although the Bahá'ís accept Muhammad, along with Christ, Moses, Buddha, and a number of other prophets, their acceptance of Bahá'u'lláh, who proclaimed a new revelation from God in 1863, means that they have denied the general Islamic belief that God would send no prophets after Muhammad. Indeed, Bahá'ís claim that there will be additional prophets in the future. Thus, a Holy War has been waged against the Bahá'ís.

Of course, to those of us who like to think of ourselves as civilized, heresy is no excuse for violence, nor is the oppression of those accused of heresy. Certainly, the abhorrence of the peoples of the world toward what has happened to the Bahá'ís in Iran is fully justified.

But what the world-at-large has not recognized--in fact, what the world-at-large and most of those several millions who call themselves Bahá'ís are totally unaware of--is the heresy which has been perpetrated within the Bahá'í Faith itself. It is a heresy promoted by those in the highest positions within the religion's administration, and because of the success of their efforts, the heresy has now become the official dogma of these Bahá'ís.

The heresy revolves around the Covenant bequeathed to the Bahá'ís by Bahá'u'lláh, the Prophet-Founder of the Faith--a Covenant in which He appointed His son, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, His successor and conferred upon him supreme authority as the Center of His Covenant and sole Interpreter of His teachings. As a final act in the exercise of this authority He left a Will and Testament whose major provision has now been declared null and void by the actions of those perpetrating the heresy.

Given little notice both within the heretical organization and in the world-at-large, a small body of believers who call themselves Orthodox Bahá'ís has for just over 30 years, and to no avail, been trying valiantly to get the erring Bahá'ís to recognize their heretical position--a position that places into jeopardy everything espoused by them.

The Orthodox Bahá'ís say that the heresy was born in 1957 within three weeks of Shoghi Effendi Rabbani's (the first Guardian of the Faith's) death. Likening the Bahá'í Administrative Order to a divinely-inspired and beautifully designed house, the Orthodox Bahá'ís indicate that the heresy's early childhood was spent in overturning and destroying almost all that the first Guardian had done to construct this house in accordance with that design--striking with pickaxes and sledges at the very foundations, the central pillars of the Bahá'í mansion. And by 1963, even before it reached early adolescence, the heresy completely dominated the shambles it had created inside that previously well-ordered structure.

The well-organized structure of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh (that which Shoghi Effendi in his writings identified as the Administrative Order of the Bahá'í Faith and which was alluded to by Bahá'u'lláh as "this most great, this new World Order...this unique, this wondrous System--the like of which mortal eyes have never witnessed") is destined to stand upon twin pillars: the institutions of the Guardianship (the divinely-appointed interpreter of the Faith) and of the Universal House of Justice (the elected international legislative body of the Faith). But in 1957, say the Orthodox Bahá'ís, the heresy within the Faith set out to destroy the pillar of the Guardianship, an action which must eventually affect every local and national administrative body established during Shoghi

Effendi's ministry, as well as the international structure developed since that time.

Outsiders who look at the outer features of the Bahá'í Faith today might well see the Faith as a strong, viable structure. Aside from its tragic difficulties in Iran, the Faith appears to be flourishing. In numbers alone the Bahá'ís claim that the American Bahá'í community experienced an increase from 20,000 believers in 1969 to 100,000 in 1982. Through 'mass teaching' in India, the numbers in that country have purportedly climbed from 850 at the beginning of 1961 to almost two million by 1987. Mesmerized by the numbers given out by the administrators of the Bahá'í Faith, those who write about the Faith are prone to say the Bahá'ís are on the right track, that what they have done and what they are doing are "in accordance with Bahá'u'lláh's instructions." But such is not the case.

When Bahá'u'lláh left this world in 1892, He left His eldest son, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, in charge, saying he was the only one who knew His book. "The book," of course, was replete with Bahá'u'lláh's written instructions--the teachings He left for mankind--the administrative principles of the Cause plus innumerable spiritual and humanitarian teachings. Naturally, the principles of the Faith and the humanitarian teachings are readily given their due by commentators who write and talk about the Faith inasmuch as the concepts are so modern: the upholding of the principle of an unfettered search after truth, the condemnation of all forms of superstition and prejudice, the teaching that religion must go hand-in-hand with science, the abolishment of the extremes of poverty and wealth, etc. What the commentators tend to by-pass, though, is at the very center, the heart of the Faith: what Bahá'í Holy Writ has to say about the appointed interpreter of the Faith, the individual who embodies the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh with the Bahá'ís who follow Him. They by-pass what constitutes the present-day Bahá'í heresy.

Until the death of Shoghi Effendi in 1957, all Bahá'ís recognized the Covenant of their Faith to be distinctive from those of other religions, for Bahá'u'lláh had written who His successor was to be and He had established the institutions of the Faith whose tenets He had revealed. The pattern was a clear one, so clear, in fact, that Shoghi Effendi, the second in the line of appointed interpreters --a

line to continue until the revelation of the next Manifestation of God in no less than 1,000 years--said of its salient features that they are "so clearly defined that we find it inexcusable to either misconceive or ignore." But misconceive and ignore them the Bahá'ís have set out to do.

Today, most people who know anything about the Bahá'í teachings recognize that the predominant focus of Bahá'u'lláh's revelation is the Oneness of Mankind. They may also recognize that in collaboration with His eldest son, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, characterized by Shoghi Effendi as "the Master-builder," He established the elements of a world civilization which it is the primary mission of their followers to establish, beginning first with the Faith itself, which is to serve in much the same way as a Model House for a housing development that includes the entire world.

Prior to 1957, all Bahá'ís knew that what is foremost in those elements is the appointed center of the Faith, the individual to whom all should turn so that differences might not arise, the position to which Bahá'u'lláh appointed His son. 'Abdu'l-Bahá subsequently explained the importance of the appointment in this manner:

As to the most great characteristic of the revelation of Bahá'u'lláh--a specific teaching not given by any of the Prophets of the past--it is the ordination and appointment of the Center of the Covenant. By this appointment and provision He has safeguarded and protected the religion of God against differences and schism, making it impossible for any one to create a new sect or faction of belief. To insure unity and agreement He has entered into a Covenant with all the people of the world including the Interpreter and Explainer of His teachings so that no one may interpret or explain the religion of God according to his own view or opinion and thus create a sect founded upon his individual understanding of the divine words. The Book of the Covenant or Testament of Bahá'u'lláh is the means of preventing such a possibility, for whosoever shall speak from the authority of himself alone shall be degraded. Be ye informed and cognizant of this.

Upon his own death in 1921, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, in his turn, left a Will and Testament of his own in which he designated his grandson Shoghi Effendi to be the next appointed interpreter of the teachings and gave him the designation "Guardian of the Faith." His Will declared that Shoghi Effendi was the one to whom all Bahá'ís should turn, that he was "the expounder of the words of God."

Bahá'ís within the Covenant--there were about 4000 of them in the United States at the outset of Shoghi Effendi's ministry--came to learn through the writings of the first Guardian that the Will of 'Abdu'l-Bahá is "The Charter of the New World Order." They further learned that Shoghi Effendi saw the Will as a supplement to Bahá'u'lláh's Most Holy Book, the Kitáb-i-Aqdas--the Book of Laws--for the first Guardian told the Bahá'ís that the two works "are not only complementary, but that they mutually confirm one another, and are inseparable parts of one complete unit."

Shoghi Effendi devoted numerous passages of his book The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh to such a theme. One such passage reads as follows:

Few will fail to recognize that the Spirit breathed by Bahá'u'lláh upon the world, and which is manifesting itself with varying degrees of intensity through the efforts consciously displayed by His avowed supporters and indirectly through certain humanitarian organizations, can never permeate and exercise an abiding influence upon mankind unless and until it incarnates itself in a visible Order, which would bear His name, wholly identify itself with His principles, and function in conformity with His laws. That Bahá'u'lláh in His Book of Aqdas, and later 'Abdu'l-Bahá in His Will --a document which confirms, supplements, and correlates the provisions of the Aqdas--have set forth in their entirety those essential elements for the constitutions of the world Bahá'í Commonwealth, no one who has read them will deny.

During the time of Shoghi Effendi's ministry the Bahá'ís knew the essentials of Bahá'u'lláh's Kitáb-i-Aqdas through the writings of Shoghi Effendi, who succinctly pointed out that the Aqdas sets forth

"the basic laws and ordinances on which the fabric of His [Bahá'u'lláh's] future World Order must rest." He noted that in the Aqdas Bahá'u'lláh establishes the institution of the House of Justice, the supreme legislative body for the world, as well as national and local bodies, and he "anticipates by implication the institution of Guardianship." Additionally, the Aqdas sets forth the law of inheritance; establishes a number of prohibitions (including slavery, asceticism, and penance); prescribes monogamy; "interdicts gambling, the use of opium, wine and other intoxicating drinks; specifies the punishments for murder, arson, adultery and theft," and provides numerous other prescriptions and proscriptions regarding the future world society. In the Aqdas Bahá'u'lláh also states that another Manifestation of God will not come until at least a thousand years has passed.

As to the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the national administrative body of the Faith in the United States during Shoghi Effendi's ministry included some of the following in its summary of the Will's topics:

- Appointment of Shoghi Effendi as Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith, sole interpreter, after 'Abdu'l-Bahá, of the Bahá'í Writings, and chairman of the Universal House of Justice; the Guardian to appoint Hands of the Faith; and provision for succession of the Guardianship through the period ended by the coming of the next Manifestation.
- Method of election of the Universal House of Justice; its functions.
- The Bahá'í attitude of obedience to civil government.
- A fixed money offering to be made to God through the Guardian.
- The greatest of all things is the protection of the True Faith of God; the sin of Covenant-breaking...
- Disobedience to the Guardian is denial of Bahá'u'lláh.

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- To none is given the right of asserting a personal opinion in relation to the Master's ('Abdu'l-Bahá's) commands. All must turn to the Center of the Cause, Shoghi Effendi, and to the House of Justice.

Thus, the Will calls for the Guardian of the Faith to be the head of the Universal House of Justice. It also says that the Guardian, in his own lifetime, must choose his successor "that differences may not appear after his passing." The successor, according to that same Will, is to be the first-born son of the Guardian if he possesses the spiritual qualities called for to be the Guardian, but if that provision of the Will cannot be satisfied, then the Guardian must choose another branch.

Those who have accepted the heresy of their leaders within the Bahá'í Faith have maintained that Shoghi Effendi was unable to fulfill the provisions of the Will, for they believe the Will restricts the Guardian to choosing his successor from within Bahá'u'lláh's blood-line. Nothing could be further from the truth. As indicated above, the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá does provide that the first-born son of the Guardian will be his successor if he has the spiritual qualifications, as determined by the incumbent Guardian, but the Will also states that should the Guardian's "glorious lineage not be matched with a goodly character, then must he, (the guardian of the Cause of God) choose another branch to succeed him."

The erring Bahá'ís maintain that the word branch in the Will and Testament is a reference to the sons of Bahá'u'lláh who are known as "Aghsan" or Branches of the Holy Tree. What they fail to note when they interpret the Will is that the document points to the lineage of the Guardian and it says that if that lineage--the direct line of descent--is not fulfilled, then the Guardian must go outside that direct line to "another branch," a member of Bahá'u'lláh's spiritual family. Joel B. Marangella, the third Guardian of the Faith elucidated the matter for his followers in 1985, saying:

It is clear that under these terms [of the Will] the incumbent Guardian of the Faith is free to choose any other male believer whose fidelity to the Covenant and spiritual qualifications

make him worthy to be considered a "branch" of the Holy Tree and to be appointed, therefore, as the Guardian's successor. In this event the following words of "Abdu'l-Bahá's "Last Tablet to America" are pertinent: "Consider! The Divine Gardener cuts off the dry or weak branch from the good tree and grafts to it, a branch from another tree." One can see that under this provision the Guardian is not bound in any way to appoint a successor from his lineal descent nor the lineal descent of Bahá'u'lláh.

As noted in the summary of the American national administrative body above, the Guardian is to nominate and appoint Hands of the Cause. These Hands are to be "under the direction of the guardian" and their obligations "are to diffuse the Divine Fragrances, to edify the souls of men, to promote learning, to improve the character of all men and to be, at all times and under all conditions, sanctified and detached from earthly things." The Will also says that the Guardian "must continually urge them..." Thus, the Guardian will be a living Guardian, not one from whom his followers obtain guidance from his writings after his death.

In another passage, the Will provides that the "Hands must be ever watchful and so soon as they find anyone beginning to oppose and protest against the guardian of the Cause of God cast him out from the congregation..."

As to the Universal House of Justice, the Will states:

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.

Furthermore, the Will prescribes that "Should any of the members [of the Universal House of Justice] commit a sin, injurious to the common weal, the guardian of the Cause of God hath at his own discretion the right to expel him..." It is a right given to no one else. Neither the Will nor the Aqdas makes any other provision to counter these injunctions.

However, when Shoghi Effendi died, his appointed successor went unnoticed, and the Bahá'ís around the world proceeded to abandon the basic tenets of the Will of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and, by extension, the provisions of Bahá'u'lláh's Kitáb-i-Aqdas (since they are "inseparable parts of one complete unit"). Of significance also is the fact that the qualifications for a Bahá'í as they were set forth by Shoghi Effendi in 1925, and subsequently included in the Declaration of Trust of national Bahá'í administrative bodies, called for, and still call for: "loyal and steadfast adherence to every clause of our Beloved's ('Abdu'l-Bahá's) sacred Will."

The heresy began when 26 of the 27 Hands of the Cause, whom Shoghi Effendi had recently appointed, gathered in the Holy Land, initiated a search for any trace of a will and testament written by Shoghi Effendi which would name his successor, and, finding none, and knowing that Shoghi Effendi had had no children, held a conclave and immediately voted in secret to consider the provisions of the Will and Testament to be no longer viable. God, they decided by majority vote, had changed His mind about the Guardianship!

In their conclave they decided that they would form a Universal House of Justice in 1963, minus the Guardian at its head, and they further decided that the supreme administrative body that they formed would be vested with the same infallibility as it would have if a Guardian were presiding as its head.

To convince the Bahá'ís of the rightness of their actions, they interpreted a reference the Guardian had made about them to mean they could temporarily lead the Faith until the formation of their Universal House of Justice. In his last message to the Bahá'ís, the Guardian had characterized the Hands as "Chief Stewards of Bahá'u'lláh's embryonic World Commonwealth." This appellation they would use to justify their de facto collective Guardianship.

All this they did while in full awareness of a proclamation that Shoghi Effendi had issued in cablegram form to the National Bahá'í Assemblies of the East and West on January 9, 1951, some six years previously. The proclamation announced the "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"--that is, since the death of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the reading of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Will. Shoghi Effendi's historic decision was the "formation of (the) first International Bahá'í Council, (the) supreme administrative institution (i.e., the Universal House of Justice) destined to emerge in (the) fullness of time..." In that same proclamation the evolution of the International Bahá'í Council was outlined by Shoghi Effendi: from this "first embryonic International Institution, marking its development into (an) officially recognized Bahá'í Court, its transformation into (a) duly-elected body, its efflorescence into (the) Universal House of Justice..."

What the Hands of the Faith ignored is that this embryonic institution had had officers designated by Shoghi Effendi and that the President of the International Bahá'í Council, who was also a Hand of the Cause, was in their midst. They also ignored the fact that Shoghi Effendi had set forth a prescribed evolutionary process for the International Bahá'í Council to pass through and that only the second stage in the development of this embryonic organism--the formation of a Bahá'í Court--was set for fulfillment by 1963 in the world-wide ten-year teaching campaign that Shoghi Effendi had set in motion in 1953.

Charles Mason Remey, the President of the International Bahá'í Council, was a man over 20 years older than Shoghi Effendi. He had been a distinguished Bahá'í since the turn of the century, and on more than one occasion 'Abdu'l-Bahá had called him his son. Mason Remey knew that he himself was the head of the embryonic Universal House of Justice, and as a consummate student of the Bahá'í writings, he was aware that 'Abdu'l-Bahá had said that "the embryo possesses from the first all perfections, such as the spirit, the mind, the sight, the smell, the taste--in one word, all the powers--but they are not visible, and become so only by degrees." However, Mason Remey did not at first put the two facts together to establish what he subsequently realized: the embryonic head of the embryonic Universal House of Justice remains with the body through all the stages of development. He was the second Guardian, duly appointed by Shoghi Effendi in the first Guardian's lifetime and announced by Shoghi Effendi to the entire Bahá'í world six years before his passing. He, Mason Remey, was the "Center of the Cause," the appointed interpreter of the divine text, despite the fact

that none of the other 26 Hands was in the slightest degree interested in locating and identifying the second Guardian.

Mason Remey kept a journal which he called his "Daily Observations," and through this means he recorded the heresy perpetrated by the Hands. He also recorded his own feelings, and after describing what transpired in the first conclave, he wrote:

During all these proceedings I sat quietly remembering the vision I had had a few years before in which I had seen myself to be the second Guardian of the Faith --this I had been thinking of a great deal since Shoghi Effendi's death, but I felt that of all the hundreds of millions of people upon the face of the earth that I was the very last one who should put forward or stand up for such. In fact, I sat there in the conclave praying silently to myself that there be nothing of the kind for me in that vision; nevertheless, I had a feeling that there was something in it. Thus, my feelings were in the balance, as it were.

Both the second and the third Guardians have indicated in their writings that if the Hands had not been obsessed with the idea that the succession had to be a blood-line appointment and if they had recognized that every clause of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Will as inviolable, they would have concluded that their "single task was to find the one who had been appointed by Shoghi Effendi in his own life-time." Instead, the Hands produced a proclamation of their own to send out to the Bahá'ís, emphasizing their position as "Chief Stewards," establishing that they had not found a will written by Shoghi Effendi, and saying they had been plunged "into the very abyss of despair" when they realized that "no successor to Shoghi Effendi could have been appointed by him." They alluded to the International Bahá'í Council a number of times, for they wanted the believers to know that Shoghi Effendi had said it was to "evolve into the Universal House of Justice" and they wanted to put across the idea that the Universal House of Justice would be infallible. In addition, they wanted the believers to know that they had set up a body of nine Hands in Haifa to serve as a custodial body pending the election of the Universal House of Justice. Finally, the Hands said they would "decide when and how the International Bahá'í Council is to evolve through the successive stages outlined by the Guardian."

That first document of November 25, 1957, did not, however, reveal their vote deeming the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá inoperative. Between that first conclave of Hands and the second a year later (indeed, during the next two years prior to his departure from Haifa in November of 1959) Mason Remey argued privately with the Hands, showing them the wrongness of their actions. At the second conclave he argued for the continuation of the Guardianship as necessary for the protection of the Faith. He urged them to see how untenable their position was. However, the minds of the Hands were made up. "In the end," Mason Remey was to write, "I was stopped on a parliamentary technicality that they had already passed on their message to the Bahá'í world and it would be out of order for its reconsideration."

Discussing the matter of the Guardianship with the other Hands became nigh unto impossible for Mason Remey, so entrenched were they in their position that everything would be resolved with the creation of the Universal House of Justice in 1963, the Hands' ignoring the fact that it had actually been created in embryo form in 1951 by Shoghi Effendi. In March of 1959 Mason Remey wrote in his "Daily Observations": "I am faced as if by a solid wall, so resistant that there is no way of penetrating it; therefore, the only thing that I see for me to do is to wait as patiently as possible the inevitable appearance of such troubles in the Cause as will force upon the Hands a change in their stand."

Meanwhile, the Hands carried forward their plans to condition the members of the Faith to believe that the Faith could go on without a Guardian and that the Bahá'ís should turn to them for guidance. They claimed that Shoghi Effendi had "endowed them with authority to consult and take appropriate measures to meet the crisis" and that the Bahá'ís could have "full assurance" in that fact. But the assurance was only on the basis of what the Hands said, not on what Shoghi Effendi, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, or Bahá'u'lláh had written. And such was also the case with their statement that "The body of the nine Hands elected to serve at the World Center is further qualified, both morally and legally, to carry forward Shoghi Effendi's plans and to serve as trustees of the Holy Shrines, properties and gardens which the Guardian so marvelously developed in Haifa and Akka." There

is no provision in the writings for the Hands to operate as they did, for, according to the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, they must work under the direction of the Guardian.

As a part of the conditioning process, the Hands and members of the national administrative bodies, especially in the United States, conditioned the Bahá'ís to think of the Hands and the offices in the Holy Land as the "Center of the Cause," the heart and hub of the Faith--designations that previously had only been attributed to the Guardian. Over the next year the American newsletter carried such statements as "The guardianship of the Faith is still vouchsafed, and the direction of the work is safeguarded through the institution of the Hands of the Cause..." and "how often he [the Guardian] pointed out to us that the 'heart' and 'nerve center' of the Faith as Haifa" and "the Hands felt the most urgent need was to protect this perfectly functioning heart [in the Holy Land], which the Guardian had for so many years and at such great cost to himself, built up..." also: "...the World Center, the heart and hub of the Faith...", "The World Center of the Faith which he so assiduously built up and consolidated, the heart of the Bahá'í World Community, has not ceased to beat", "...protect the World Center and maintain it as the unifying hub of the great wheel of the Cause," "...the Chief Stewards supply the instrument through which the Bahá'í World Community is guided and encouraged...", and "...protect the World Center and maintain it as the unifying hub of the great wheel of the Cause..."

Additionally, the Bahá'ís were instructed to "desist from all further speculation on the future development of the institutions of the Faith." The purported reason for that instruction was to prevent giving "rise to those very differences of interpretation forbidden by Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdul-Bahá."

During this two-year conditioning campaign, Mason Remey, who had been called to Haifa in 1951 by Shoghi Effendi to make it his permanent home, was a member of the nine-member body of Hands in Haifa. As he had not realized as yet his accession to the Guardianship, he felt constrained to adhere to the policy within the Faith that in decisions made by consulting bodies he was obliged to sign the messages going forth from Haifa. At the same time, though, he objected to the other Hands that the letters should not be signed

as "in the service of the Beloved Guardian" as though Shoghi Effendi were still performing the Guardian's functions in the next world. Rather, he felt they should be written in the service of the living Guardian, (though he had not as yet been discovered), for as he remarked in his "Daily Observations": "the Guardianship is a divinely appointed office and not a personality." The power of the Guardianship, he said, transcends the personality of a single Guardian.

Anyone who had read the first Guardian's writings (and Mason Remey was certainly one of them) knew that Shoghi Effendi had unreservedly stated that Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá had "clearly and specifically laid down a set of Laws, established definite institutions, and provided for the essentials of a Divine Economy." He had emphasized that the Guardianship and the Universal House of Justice are "twin institutions" which are "destined to apply the principles, promulgate the laws, protect the institutions, adapt loyally and intelligently the Faith to the requirements of progressive society, and consummate the incorruptible inheritance which the Founders of the Faith have bequeathed to the world." [Emphasis added.]

In his The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh Shoghi Effendi had stated that these two institutions "should be regarded as divine in origin, essential in their functions and complementary in their aim and purpose." Furthermore, he said, "Their common, their fundamental object is to insure the continuity of that divinely-appointed authority which flows from the Source of our Faith, to safeguard the unity of its followers and to maintain the integrity and flexibility of its teachings." He noted that they act "in conjunction with each other," and he said that each "operates within a clearly defined sphere of jurisdiction; each is equipped with its own attendant institutions." Moreover, he stated that these institutions "supplement each other's authority and functions, and are permanently and fundamentally united in their aims."

Everyone within the Faith who had read Shoghi Effendi carefully knew that he had written: "Without such an institution [of the Guardianship] the integrity of the Faith would be imperiled, and the stability of the entire fabric would be gravely endangered." They also

knew his view that without the Guardianship "the necessary guidance to define the sphere of the legislative action of its elected representatives would be totally withdrawn." And they also knew that he had said: "The interpretation of the Guardian, functioning within his own sphere, is as authoritative and binding as the enactments of the International House of Justice, whose exclusive right and prerogative is to pronounce upon and deliver the final judgment on such laws and ordinances as Bahá'u'lláh has not expressly revealed. Neither can, nor will ever, infringe upon the sacred and prescribed domain of the other. Neither will seek to curtail the specific and undoubted authority with which both have been divinely invested."

And yet it was against just such statements as these that the Hands of the Faith and eventually all who joined them in their program of heresy worked to set up a different organization, a man-made order without the institution of the Guardianship. The Will of 'Abdu'l-Bahá makes it clear that there are to be two elements within the Universal House of Justice: 1) the democratic element of elected representatives, chosen by vote of the national administrative bodies, and 2) the appointed head who, because of the Guardian's actual authority is not, as Shoghi Effendi points out, "the figurehead invariably associated with the prevailing systems of constitutional monarchies." But the Hands of the Cause did not take these elements into account when they took their next step at the third conclave of Hands. Instead, they moved to terminate the International Bahá'í Council--the embryonic Universal House of Justice--so as to elect an entire body of their own. In the process, they decided to skip one of the evolutionary stages established by Shoghi Effendi as an "essential prelude to the institution of the Universal House of Justice," that of the Bahá'í Court.

The election was called for 1961, at which time the Hands said the new Council would "work under the direction and supervision of the Hands of the Cause residing in the Holy Land, serve a two year term of office, and cease to exist upon the occasion of the election of the Universal House of Justice" in 1963. In other words, the divinely-conceived embryo was to be aborted for a mechanism put together by the Hands.

Mason Remey would have none of it. As President of the Council he took the position that the Hands had no right to direct the Council's affairs. He thus departed the company of Hands, leaving Haifa to go into voluntary exile. From November of 1959 to April of 1960 he sent repeated appeals to the Hands to forego their plans. But the Hands paid him no heed, thus precipitating in April 1960 a Proclamation from Mason Remey to the Bahá'í world, announcing that he was the second Guardian of the Faith and explaining that he had been the Guardian since Shoghi Effendi's death in 1957.

Because Mason Remey had no organization working with him to disseminate his message, he forwarded it to the National Spiritual Assembly of Bahá'ís of the United States, requesting that that body promulgate it on his behalf. What subsequently occurred was described in a history of the heresy at the world center written in 1975 by Joel B. Marangella, the third Guardian of the Faith:

This never happened. The Chairman and Secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States were both Hands of the Cause. Their minds were already made up. They and their fellow-members rejected Mason Remey's Proclamation out of hand. The remaining Hands in Haifa forthwith dispatched a highly derogatory and denunciatory message to the Bahá'ís, labeling Mason Remey an imposter. As the domination and control that these Hands had come to exercise over the Bahá'ís throughout the world was now complete, this act on the part of the Hands assured that the Proclamation would never be read, much less be considered, studied and meditated upon by the great mass of the believers so that they might determine for themselves the validity of Mason Remey's claim to the Guardianship. Therefore, as paradoxical as it may seem, Mason Remey found arrayed against him the concerted opposition, power and influence of the Hands of the Cause, and the National and Local Spiritual Assemblies of the Bahá'í World with the single exception of the National Spiritual Assembly of France, which had received a copy of the Proclamation, accepted Mason Remey as the second Guardian and then arose with alacrity to translate this Proclamation into French and disseminate it to the believers

throughout France. A few copies of Mason Remey's Proclamation found their way into other hands, but the mass of believers throughout the world were never given an opportunity to read the Proclamation in their respective languages and judge for themselves the validity of the second Guardian's claims (nor, indeed, have they read it to this day).

Thus, when Mason Remey proclaimed his Guardianship to the Bahá'ís, the great majority rejected him and accepted the heresy perpetrated by the Hands of the Faith, who pronounced Mason Remey and those who followed him Covenant-breakers. Ironically, then, the ones who had actually broken away from the Faith were the overwhelming majority, and those who were speaking out against the Guardian were the Hands of the Cause, the very ones who were supposed to protect the Guardian. Instead of following the Guardian, as the Will of 'Abdu'l-Bahá enjoined them to do, the Hands assumed an authority that is nowhere to be found for them in the Bahá'í writings.

In 1963 the Hands and their followers developed a Universal House of Justice without a Guardian at its head. The man-made Universal House has since become both the Center of their Cause and the supreme legislative body, thus completely contradicting Shoghi Effendi's assertion that neither body "can, nor will ever, infringe upon the sacred and prescribed domain of the other."

The heretical international body has a constitution which replaces provisions of the Will and Testament, the document that Shoghi Effendi had said could no more be divorced from Bahá'u'lláh than it could from 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Since the Hands' international body is without a Guardian, that body will now remove any member who commits "a sin injurious to the common weal," apparently by majority vote, for the Constitution does not say. In addition, the Universal House now appoints those who have the same functions that were ascribed to the Hands. (The apostate organization does not call such individuals "Hands," since as even that body knows, only a Guardian can appoint Hands. However, because of the exigencies of the time, those with the functions of the Hands now serve under the Universal House of Justice rather than the Guardian.)

Of prime significance, according to the Orthodox Bahá'ís who are under the third Guardian of the Faith: the ersatz Universal House of Justice has no one on the body to call them to account. Shoghi Effendi wrote in The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh that the Guardian of the Faith "is bound to insist upon a reconsideration by them [the fellow-members of the Universal House of Justice] of any enactment he conscientiously believes to conflict with the meaning and to depart from the Spirit of Bahá'u'lláh's revealed utterances." The headless Universal house of Justice, though, stoutly maintains that "Nowhere is it stated that the infallibility of the Universal House of Justice is by virtue of the Guardian's membership or presence on that body." In the same message that they make that statement they also say: "In attempting to understand the Writings...one must first realize that there is and can be no real contradiction in them, and in the light of this we can confidently seek the unity of meaning which they contain." In other words, the unguided Universal House of Justice says the writings are clear and there is no need for the interpreter extolled by 'Abdu'l-Bahá to prevent somebody from creating "a sect founded upon his individual understanding of the divine words." It is through such pronouncements that the Universal House of Justice continues to perpetuate the heresy within the Bahá'í Faith.

Those who follow that body maintain that the spread of their Faith is a sign that their Cause is God's Cause, and they now encourage all comers to join with them in developing what they say are the foundations of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh.

The Orthodox Bahá'ís--a much smaller body of Bahá'u'lláh's followers--have, through their own appeals to those they call heterodox Bahá'ís, attempted to get those devotees of the Hands/Universal House to see the error of their ways. But because the Orthodox Bahá'ís have been called Covenant-breakers by those within the larger organization, the heterodox Bahá'ís will have nothing to do with those in the smaller body, those who followed Mason Remey and now are following his duly-appointed successor, the third Guardian Joel B. Marangella. The Orthodox Bahá'ís, who continue their adherence to every clause of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Will and Testament, have, under the direction of their Guardian established a provisional national council in the United States in Roswell, New

Mexico, site of the first local governing board in the ministry of Joel Marangella. They maintain that in the fullness of time the organization that continues to remain faithful to the Covenant by accepting and supporting the line of appointed Guardians of the Faith, will establish the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh in accordance with the Faith's sacred writings. The Orthodox Bahá'ís are convinced that those who follow the heretical organization are destined for failure.

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