



Proclamation

of the

Third

Guardian

November 12, 1969



Worms, Germany
November 12, 1969

To the faithful supporters of the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh throughout the world.

Dearly beloved brothers and sisters in El Abhá,

Well nigh a decade has passed since a spiritual catastrophe of undreamt of magnitude revolving around the Guardianship of the Faith struck at the very roots of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh and swept away all but a handful of stalwart defenders and champions of His Covenant. Following the passing of the first Guardian of the Faith, a small band of steadfast and intrepid supporters of the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh who had refused to lose faith in the inviolability of this mighty Covenant and in the immortality of the "**Child of the Covenant**" - the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá - penned by the Center of that Covenant, recognized the second Guardian of the Faith appointed under the provisions of that divinely - conceived Document. They rallied to his support and defense and by their acts of courage, faith and devotion added another unforgettable chapter to the annals of our Faith. How very strange and unexpected it was for these faithful defenders of the Covenant to find themselves, then, the target of a veritable onslaught of vituperation and calumny launched against them by those believers who, during the ministry of the first Guardian of the Faith, had gained such widespread fame amongst their fellow believers for their devotion, fidelity and service to him, the chosen first minister of that Covenant. How paradoxical it was for these supporters of the second Guardian to be maligned and blasphemed for having remained faithful to the Covenant. How incomprehensible it was to them to find that so many of their fellow believers had permitted themselves to be led astray from the protection and safety of the Fold of the Covenant and the recognition of the second chosen minister of the Covenant, the Guardian of the Faith, so soon after the passing of the first Guardian. How saddening it was to learn that these formerly faithful friends had passed out from under the shade of the Covenant, had



lost their faith in the inviolability and immortality of the provisions of the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and had, however unwittingly, joined the ranks of its enemies.

The first beloved Guardian of the Faith, Shoghi Effendi, labored unremittingly over the span of his thirty-six year ministry to establish the Covenant on a firm foundation in the hearts and minds of the believers. His copious and matchless writings contain numberless passages devoted to the subject of the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh and to that priceless heritage, the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, whose provisions he said only future generations would fully comprehend. Those of us who read and studied the writings of Shoghi Effendi were thrilled by the sublime and supernal vision that he imparted to us of the future World Order of Bahá'u'lláh based on the divine System bequeathed to us in the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. One might ask what more could Shoghi Effendi have said to bring to the friends a fuller comprehension of the divine origin, the immortality and immutability of the unique Institutions of that God-given System. What language could Shoghi Effendi have chosen to more glowingly and befittingly describe the sacred and divinely inspired character of that immortal Document - the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, a Document characterized by him as the brightest emanation of His Mind, the divinely - conceived offspring resulting from the mystical union between the Mind of Bahá'u'lláh and the Mind of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and therefore the very Will and Purpose of the Author of the Bahá'í Revelation, Himself. And what more superlative appellation could he have given this Document than to extol it as a supplement to the Most Holy Book, Itself - The Aqdas - and therefore a part of the Divine Explicit Text whose Laws and provisions would remain sacrosanct and unalterable down through the ages of the Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh. Supreme among the divinely-conceived Institutions bequeathed to us in the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá is the Institution-of Guardianship, for the incumbent of that Office in the language of the Will and Testament is **"the expounder of the words of God"**, the director of the Hands of the Cause and the **"sacred head and distinguished member for life"**

of the Universal House of Justice, the supreme legislative Organ of the Bahá'í Administrative System.

With the sudden and completely unexpected passing of the first Guardian of the Faith, Shoghi Effendi, the believers suffered a tremendous shock, followed almost immediately by the second shock of finding that Shoghi Effendi had apparently failed to appoint a successor in the manner they had anticipated based on their interpretation of the provisions of the Will and Testament. Failing to find a successor so appointed, the great majority of the believers, led by the then Hands of the Cause, forthwith concluded that the Institution of Guardianship had ended with the passing of Shoghi Effendi and that he had failed to appoint a successor in spite of all that he had said about the immortal provisions of the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. A small number of the believers had refused to accept this view and clung to their faith in the continuity of the Guardianship in spite of the signs at the time to the contrary. Some three years were to pass before the faith of those who had remained firm was vindicated and rewarded upon receipt of a Proclamation issued by the second Guardian of the Faith at Ridván, 1960. This Proclamation struck as a thunderbolt in the Bahá'í World and brought on the spiritual catastrophe aforementioned. To the faithful few, it brought the joy of the realization that the line of Guardianship of the Faith had remained unbroken as promised in the Will and Testament and discovery of the unique manner in which Shoghi Effendi had provided for the continuity of the Guardianship in complete conformity to the provisions of the Will and Testament but not in accordance with the preconceived opinions of the believers. These faithful friends hastened to embrace the second Guardian and arose with renewed dedication to work for the victory of the Covenant. Armed with the irrefutable arguments contained in the Proclamation and Mason Remey's subsequent Encyclical Letters, as well as the enlightening expositions in his "**Daily Observations**" penned during the painful and fateful years of his residence at Haifa following the passing of Shoghi Effendi, the faithful friends composed numerous treatises and apologia of their own supporting the claim of Mason Remey to the Guardianship.

In spite of the fierce opposition which the Proclamation engendered and the machinations of this new generation of violators of the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh, the true Faith under the hereditary Guardianship slowly began

to grow and win adherence to its ranks in the four corners of the earth. It was not long before strong groups were formed on several continents followed by the establishment of Local Spiritual Assemblies and the formation of National Spiritual Assemblies in the United States and in Pakistan. The high water mark in this progress was reached with the historic announcement made by the second Guardian on 21 September 1964 of the creation of the second International Bahá'í Council (announced in the October 1964 issue of the Glad Tidings). Through the means of this historic announcement, the second Guardian, similarly to the first Guardian, publicly announced to the believers the one whom he had chosen as his potential successor to Guardianship (i.e., by naming the President of the Council). But he had gone a step further than Shoghi Effendi to reinforce this appointment and to avoid any future doubt by placing in the hands of his successor-to-be well in advance of this public announcement a document written in his own hand naming him as his successor. This fact is herewith revealed publicly for the first time. This act of appointment goes back to the year 1961, some nineteen months after the Proclamation issued by Mason Remey. In December of that year a letter was received from Mason Remey in whose outer envelope was enclosed a smaller sealed envelope containing the following inscription written by Mason Remey on its face:

"Joel: Please take care of this sealed envelope among your papers in the Bernese Oberland. As I see things now it may have to do with the coming world catastrophe in or after 1963. You will know when to break the seal."

In accordance with the instructions contained thereon, this letter was deposited unopened in a safety deposit box in a bank near my permanent residence in Switzerland. Its receipt was mentioned to no one.

It remained for Mason Remey's announcement on September 21, 1964, of my appointment as President of the Second International Bahá'í Council (the embryonic Universal House of Justice) to publicly make known to the believers that I would be the third Guardian of the Faith unless, as he stated, I was unable to assume this Office. In this eventuality and apparently based on his conviction that the world catastrophe which he had prophesied would

have grave and unpredictable consequences, he also designated the eight Vice-Presidents as potential successors in the order named. Soon after this public announcement I journeyed to Switzerland where for planning purposes I felt that the time had come to break the seal of the document which had been deposited there some three years earlier. The statement contained therein was handwritten at Washington, D.C. on December 5, 1961, and read as follows:

"Dear Joel:

This is to tell you to tell the Bahá'í World that I appoint you to be the third Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith according to the Will and Testament of the Master, 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

***Mason, Guardian
of the Bahá'í Faith"***

Upon reading this statement of appointment, I was first struck by the fact that it was addressed to me and not to the believers and that it commissioned me **"to tell"** the Bahá'í World that I was the third Guardian. The question which immediately arose in my mind was when I should tell the believers of this appointment. I concluded then that such an announcement on my part would only be appropriate after the passing of the second Guardian. Also, it occurred to me that such an announcement made after the passing of Mason Remey would then only be a confirmation of what had already been announced to the believers by the second Guardian at the time the second International Bahá'í Council was created. The thought did not cross my mind at that time that it would ever be proper to make this announcement in advance of the passing of the second Guardian. In this regard, Bahá'ís had accepted as a matter of course that the incumbent of the Office of Guardianship would hand over the spiritual scepter of this Office to his successor only at the hour of his death (although an examination of the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá does not disclose

that this is a precondition). I did not mention opening this letter of appointment to anyone at the time outside of my own family nor did I write to Mason Remey about it.

As time went on Mason Remey assigned increasing responsibilities to me in my capacity as President of the Council. A culmination was reached in the summer of 1965 when I visited him in Florence, Italy, and he instructed me to announce to the Bahá'í World the activation of the second International Bahá'í Council. He left the wording of this announcement to me. I recall wondering to myself at the time how I would word such an announcement as Mason Remey's Proclamation had made it very clear to all of us why Shoghi Effendi had never instructed him during his lifetime to activate the first International Bahá'í Council (created in 1951), for had he done so Mason Remey, as its President (i.e., the head of the Universal House of Justice), would have at that instant automatically become the second Guardian. Upon returning to France where I was residing at the time and reflecting further on how I should phrase the announcement activating the Council, I prepared the statement which appears in the Glad Tidings of October 1965 under the heading of "**Council Assumes Task**". This statement was forwarded to Mason Remey for approval, although he had not asked me to do so. A review of this statement will show that I attempted to resolve my dilemma by using such phrases as: "***the second International Bahá'í Council (the embryonic Universal House of Justice under the hereditary Guardianship) will not be convened at this time as a collectively functioning body***" and "***The President will assign responsibilities and tasks to individual members of the Council***". However, recalling the circumstances surrounding the creation of the first International Bahá'í Council in 1951, it will be remembered that Shoghi Effendi, himself, had issued all instructions and assigned tasks to individual members of the Council. Therefore, Mason Remey, the embryonic Head of the embryonic Universal House of Justice, remained in this embryonic state destined only to emerge and come into active life as Guardian of the Faith upon the passing of Shoghi Effendi. My situation was different for it is now apparent that the procedure which I conceived and placed into effect with the aim of circumventing activation of the Council really did not accomplish this purpose at all. For the moment I assumed responsibility for directing members of the Council in the performance of their tasks the Council was actively functioning and activated under its President (its activation not

necessarily being contingent upon a collective convocation of its members in a given place). The head of this functioning body could only be the Guardian of the Faith. Whether Mason Remey, himself, at the time, grasped the implications of his instructions to me to activate the Council is not known to me. If he did not, however, a subsequent announcement which he directed I prepare and release to the faithful Bahá'ís indicated that he had turned the affairs of the Faith over to me. In a letter under date of February 18, 1966, he stated: "***I am turning the affairs of the Faith over to you as the President of the second Bahá'í International Council to handle this for me - you having the other members of the International Council to assist you***" and further in this same letter "***from now on I will leave you free to conduct the affairs of the Faith, I making suggestions when necessary***". (Published in the Glad Tidings of May 1966).

It is difficult to point to a specific date when the fortunes of the Faith under the hereditary Guardianship began to falter and then later to decline rapidly, but it was soon after the formation of the second International Bahá'í Council. I, myself, suffered considerable consternation on more than one occasion at that time upon receiving letters from Mason Remey which were increasingly condemnatory of everything that the first Guardian of the Faith had said and accomplished during his ministry and which presented views diametrically opposite from many of those which he had expressed in his Proclamation, Encyclical Letters, Daily Observations and other writings penned during the early years of his ministry. In several instances I felt moved to write to Mason Remey on these matters pointing out in some cases that I felt this continued criticism of the actions of the first Guardian would serve no useful purpose, even if justified, and would in the eyes of the believers weaken the basis of his own claim to the Guardianship. I felt increasingly frustrated and helpless at the time, a feeling I am certain was shared by many of the faithful believers, as one by one the victories which we had won for the Covenant so recently, began to slip from our grasp. It was not long before the Bahá'í administrative institutions under the hereditary Guardianship were dismantled by Mason Remey and the second International Bahá'í Council which had been activated only some twelve months earlier was summarily dismissed without the slightest prior intimation to its President of his intention to do so. In a letter addressed to me on October 18, 1966, Mason Remey instructed: "***At your leisure will you***

kindly turn over to me such records as you have of the second Council that no longer exists,"

As sad as the situation had now become within the fold of the faithful believers, there remained for Mason Remey to make what to me was a startling and inexplicable announcement which had the effect of suddenly and fully awakening me to the gravity of the situation. This was an announcement in August 1967 that a person other than myself and not one of the original members of the second International Bahá'í Council whom he had designated as potential Guardians, had been appointed the third Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith. As Mason Remey had not nullified in any way his former appointment in 1961 of myself as third Guardian, it was inconceivable and incomprehensible that he should make an alternate appointment. For the first time I felt impelled to write to Mason Remey apprising him of my knowledge of his appointment of me as third Guardian on December 5, 1961, enclosing a photostatic copy of same asking for an explanation. His reply offered no explanation and served to confirm my worst fears that something was seriously wrong if Mason Remey had forgotten, as was obviously the case, this all-important appointment. This sad turn of events, needless to say, caused a great commotion in my heart and soul. After meditating on the situation for some time in an effort to find a rational explanation, it dawned on my consciousness that the reason for this, as well as the lamentable state of affairs in the Faith and the conflicting statements which were coming from Mason Remey lay in the fact that the mantle of Guardianship no longer reposed on the shoulders of Mason Remey nor had it done so since the autumn of 1964 when I had opened the letter addressed to me by Mason Remey telling me to tell the Bahá'í World that I was the third Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith. As earlier explained, I had considered at the time that this was an announcement that I would only make after the passing of Mason Remey. But as I have already pointed out Mason Remey had on two occasions provided me with the opportunity, however unbeknownst to himself and unrecognized by me to take over the reins of the Faith (i.e., when the Council was activated in October 1965 and in February 1966). In some respects, my own failure to perceive my accession to the Guardianship parallels the experience of Mason Remey as it will be recalled that some three years elapsed (from 1957 to 1960) before he perceived that he had been the Guardian of the Faith since the passing of Shoghi Effendi.

Having finally come to the realization late in 1967 that I had actually been the Guardian of the Faith since 1964, the faithful friends may well ask why I did not forthwith claim this fact to them then and there. I can only say in reply that the thought of plunging the Faith into a fresh crisis over the matter of succession was abhorrent to me. Moreover, I was certain that my claim to the Guardianship would now most certainly be openly repudiated by the very one who had appointed me to this supreme Office - my predecessor in the Office of Guardianship and one whom I had deeply loved and endeavored with all my heart and soul to faithfully serve. Further, I reasoned that this situation would be seized upon by the sans-Guardian Bahá'ís as proof of the falsity of Mason Remey's claim to the Guardianship following Shoghi Effendi's passing and would be considered by the non-Bahá'í world as further evidence of schism and division within the Faith. With these thoughts in mind, coupled with my feeling that the faithful friends were not yet prepared to accept my claim to the Guardianship, I elected to remain silent and await the course of events.

Encouraged and emboldened by the remarkable fact that a few believers have recently had the spiritual perception to recognize, without any solicitation on my part, my accession to the Guardianship, I have decided to break my self-imposed silence, to present herewith the basis of my claim to the present Guardianship of the Faith and to hereby proclaim this to the Bahá'í World. In doing so, I am keenly aware that once again the faithful supporters of the Covenant and the Guardianship will be severely tested. My one consolation lies in the thought that this new test may for once and for all cause the believers to realize that the Institution of the Guardianship of the Faith is independent of and apart from the individual who occupies this Office at a particular time. Down through the ages to come, different persons will sit upon the spiritual Throne of the Guardianship - a Throne upon which is focused the light of the Holy Spirit. Only when the one who is the "**chosen branch**" of the Tree of the Covenant is seated thereon does he become irradiated with that eternal Light and is he enabled to discharge the sacred Trust with which he has been invested.

Dearly beloved friends, the hour is late - very late indeed. The fortunes of our precious Faith have perhaps reached their lowest ebb since the fateful and tragic events of more than a century ago when following the martyrdom

of the Báb, the heroes of this early epoch, were struck down one by one by the ferocious and pitiless attacks of the external enemies of the Faith. Has not our beloved Faith during the past decade sustained successive blows of an internal spiritual nature no less severe in their own way than those physical blows which decimated the heroic Dawnbreakers during the Dispensation of the Báb and as dire in their consequences? Rest assured, however, that these successive tests which have afflicted this infant Faith in accordance with God's inscrutable purpose can only further fortify the faith of those who stand fast and firm in the Covenant and spiritually prepare these faithful friends to more befittingly discharge their services to the threshold of Bahá'u'lláh.

The third Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith supplicates God that the faithful friends will accept his Guardianship, unite as never before, forget past differences, march forward together to regain our lost victories and continue onward to establish the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh on a firm and lasting foundation.

Your faithful and loving brother in El Abhá.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Joel Bray Marangella".

Third Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith

2 Enclosures:

1. Photostatic copy of inscription on envelope
2. Photostatic copy of letter of appointment

JOEL: Please take care of this sealed envelope
among your papers in the Bureau of Records.
All the things now it may have to do with
the coming market catastrophe in or after 1963.
You will know when to break the seal.

Manson
WASHINGTON, D. C., U.S.A.
5 December 1961.

Washington, D.C., U.S.A.

5 December 1961

Dear Jack:

I have to tell you to tell
the "Chairman" or would that
I appoint you to be the
Third Commissioner of the
Bureau in order according to
the original agreement of
the President of the U.S. - to
be the Chairman of the
Bureau. I understand
of the original agreement.