

The Guardian and the East

Exported from Holy-Writings.com on 2026-09-17 — 1 clipping

Source: Bahá'í Library Online (bahai-library.com), curated by Jonah Winters.

Used by permission of the curator. Original citation: Alí-Akbar Furútan, *The Guardian and the East*, bahai-library.com.

[illegible]

The Guardian and the East

Alí-Akbar Furútan

published in *The Vision of Shoghi Effendi* pp. 69-72

Ottawa, ON: Association for Bahá'í Studies North America, 1993

[p69]

This servant twice had the bounty of going to the Holy Land, achieving his heart's desire by attaining the presence of the beloved Guardian of the Cause of God. This privilege has been and will ever be a source of great pride and joy for me in both this world and in the world to come.

After the passing of the beloved Master, the Mystery of God, the mantle of authority fell on Shoghi Effendi, who was the "most distinguished branch," "the Priceless Pearl," "the interpreter of the Word of God" and his "sign on earth." It was he who was charged, through the provision of the Will and Testament of the Center of the Covenant of the Ancient Beauty with the leadership of the people of Baha in both the East and the West. It was he who, during thirty-six years of Guardianship took the Cause of God to such heights of ascendancy as to astonish all people.

In this essay, this servant wishes to describe briefly the conditions of the beloved friends in Iran and its neighboring countries, and to review the achievements of the Cause after the passing of 'Abdu'l-Baha, during the Guardianship of Shoghi Effendi. Thus, it will become clearer to the reader what bounty, what felicity and honor there is in being under the protecting shade of the Center of the Covenant of the Almighty.

When Shoghi Effendi assumed the office of Guardianship in 1922, only one spiritual assembly, known as the "Spiritual Assembly of Tehran," existed in Iran, the cradle of the Cause of God, and that assembly had been founded at the instruction of 'Abdu'l-Baha. Fifteen notable believers of the capital and four Hands of the Cause God comprised its membership. In Russian Turkistan, in the cities of Ishqabad and Marv, and in the Caucasia in Badkubih there also existed a spiritual assembly that attended to the affairs of the friends there.

In his first message addressed to the believers in Iran, written in his own handwriting and matchless style, the beloved Guardian thus addressed the

friends in Iran: "Adequate and appropriate guidelines for the election and establishment of the Universal House of Justice will be made available to the friends after consultation and a complete study of the matter." Also in [p70] his weighty message of 1922, he stated: "...it is my bounden duty, while consulting with the friends and relying upon God, to devote my thoughts and energy to making the necessary provisions for the establishment of that Body which, in the future, will resolve the most complex issues and legislate on all matters not explicitly revealed in the book, as well as elucidating on abstruse subjects...."

Thereafter, in numerous messages he graciously shared with the friends detailed instructions for the establishment and functioning of spiritual assemblies in every city and village, in full conformity with the administrative principles. Local spiritual assemblies were to refer important matters to the Central Spiritual Assembly of Tehran-which at that time functioned as the National Spiritual Assembly of Iran. The Central Assembly of Tehran was to refer to the Holy Land those matters that it deemed were beyond its authority and competence.

From this point forward, i.e., 1922, the beloved Guardian started direct communication with Baha'i centers in Iran, whether large cities or small villages, and in all his weighty messages guided the friends of the Merciful to the establishment of spiritual assemblies. Like a skilled and loving teacher, he would expound and elaborate on the subject for his students until gradually the friends became familiar with Baha'u'llah's Administrative Order and learned the fundamental principles for establishing spiritual assemblies based on the revealed teachings. Thus, they gradually learned to put these teachings into practice.

The beloved Guardian followed the same approach for the friends in India, Pakistan, Burma, Egypt, Sudan, Russian Turkistan, and Turkey, encouraging and guiding them, in numerous messages, to strengthen the foundation of the New Order and to form local spiritual assemblies-to which he had referred as the pillars of future national spiritual assemblies. At the same time, in his weighty messages he directed the friends to teach the Baha'i Faith, shun the covenant-breakers, educate the children and youth, cling to praiseworthy conduct, avoid moral degradation, live pure and sanctified lives, and become detached from all save God. Thus, over a number of years, he prepared the Baha'i communities in the East for the establishment of national spiritual assemblies-which are the mighty pillars of God's Supreme House of Justice.

Among the important achievements in Iran and neighboring countries during Shoghi Effendi's Guardianship the following can be listed:

The direction of the friends and spiritual assemblies to gather the sacred Writings and to dispatch their originals and verified copies to the Holy Land for authentication;

The firm establishment of a system of statistics and a local register of believers;

The focus of the immediate attention of the friends on the ordinances of the [p71] Kitab-i-Aqdas, the provisions of the Will and Testament of 'Abdul-Baha and the complete avoidance of the covenant-breakers who persisted in trying to wreck the foundation of the Cause of God;

As a result of the beloved Guardian's indefatigable efforts (I personally heard the Guardian, during my pilgrimage, say that he worked twenty hours a day, resting only four hours), the establishment of national spiritual assemblies in the following countries in preparation for the formation of the Universal House of Justice: India, Pakistan, and Burma (1923); Egypt and the Sudan (1924); Iraq (1932); Iran (1934).

The Guardian's other significant accomplishments and influence include:

Founding the editorial board of Baha'i News in Iran (Tehran) in 1923;

Membership of women, in the East, on local and national spiritual assemblies in 1954;

Letter from the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada addressed to Reza Shah -- at the request of the Guardian -- explaining the Baha'i principles and requesting the release of the Baha'is in Iran from the fetters of religious orthodoxy;

Commission of Martha Root to travel in Iran to meet with those in authority in an effort to dispel their misunderstandings about the Baha'i Faith;

Appointment of Keith Ransom-Kehler as a special envoy to Iran to meet with prominent people and government officials in an effort to curtail the persecution of the believers in that land. (Mrs. Ransom-Kehler passed away in Isfahan);

Instruction of the Iranian community to send travel teachers to Iraq and Turkish Kurdistan;

Issuance of clear and unmistakable directions for the observance of the Nineteen-Day Feasts in accordance with the provisions of the administrative order;

Stress on the vital necessity of contributing to the Fund;

Placement of particular emphasis on the education of youth and children and teaching them the Arabic language;

Numerous weighty messages pointing out the necessity of pioneering != primarily out of Iran to distant lands and secondarily to towns and villages away from Tehran -- clearly directing the friends to disperse from population centers.

As a result of these repeated instructions, a large number of Iranian friends succeeded in pioneering out of Iran to countries in Europe, Latin America, Asia, Australia, and North America in an effort to enhance the progress of the Cause of God.

Any effort on my part would fail to explain adequately the accomplishments of the beloved Guardian, much like the feeble attempt of an ignorant person who may fondly imagine that he or she can contain an ocean in a small cup. However, what I have tried to do is to convey a glimpse of the untiring efforts of the beloved Guardian. The steadfastness, sacrifices and martyrdoms of the Iranian friends (which are now well known the world [p72] over by young and old alike and which brings tears of sadness to us all) were all the result of thirty-six years of divine education an training under the leadership of the beloved Guardian. Praise be to God that we live at a time when the wish of the beloved Guardian for the establishment of the Supreme House of Justice has been fulfilled. That which the sign of God on earth had foretold and disclosed to the vision of the Iranian friends in 1932 was fulfilled in 1963.

METADATA

Views1369 views since posted 2025-03-06; last edit 2025-03-07 05:05 UTC;

previous at archive.org.../furutan_guardian_east

Language

English

Permission

fair use

Share

Shortlink: bahai-library.com/6800

Citation: ris/6800

select Collection:

Archives

Articles

Articles-unpublished

Audio

Bibliographies

BIC

Biographies

Books

Chronologies

Compilations

Compilations-NSA

Compilations-personal

Documents

East-asia

Encyclopedia

Essays

Etc

Excerpts

Fiction

Glossaries

Guardian
Histories
Introductory
Letters
Maps
Music
Newspapers
NSA-documents
NSA-letters
Personal
Pilgrims
Poetry
Presentations
Resources
Reviews
Scripts
Software
Statistics
Study
Talks
Theses
Transcripts
Translations
UHJ-documents
UHJ-letters
Video
Visual
Writings

home

sitemap

series

chronology

search:

author

title

date

tags

adv. search

languages

inventory

bibliography

[abbreviations](#)

[links](#)

[about](#)

[contact](#)

[RSS](#)

[new](#)

— The Guardian and the East (Used by permission of the curator)