

SHOGHI EFFENDI: Let Us Arise

Have you ever faced a responsibility that was so big, you felt like the weight of the world was on your shoulders?

As a young man, Shoghi Effendi felt like this when he became the leader of the Bahá'í community.

Shoghi Effendi was born on March 1, 1897, in 'Akká, Israel. He was raised in the home of his grandfather, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, who led the Bahá'í Faith after Bahá'u'lláh's passing. Shoghi Effendi's father was Mírzá Hádí Shírází, a descendant of the Báb. His mother was Díyá'íyyih Khánúm, 'Abdu'l-Bahá's eldest daughter.

As a boy, Shoghi Effendi was full of energy and curiosity. He had a deep bond with 'Abdu'l-Bahá, who was known as the Master.

When he was five, Shoghi Effendi asked 'Abdu'l-Bahá to write something for him. 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote, "Now is not the time for you

to read and write, it is the time for jumping about and chanting . . . memorize the prayers . . . and chant them that I may hear them . . ."

From then on, Shoghi Effendi chanted prayers loudly enough to be heard throughout the neighborhood. When family asked him to be quieter, he said, "The Master wrote to me to chant that He may hear me! I am doing my best!"

In his teens, Shoghi Effendi went to the American University of Beirut in Lebanon. When not studying, he enjoyed mountain climbing, swimming, and soccer.

After graduating in 1918, some of Shoghi Effendi's happiest days were spent working as 'Abdu'l-Bahá's secretary. For about two years, he was at 'Abdu'l-Bahá's side day and night, often translating letters and conversations into English for Bahá'ís from the West. He wrote to

a friend, "What a dear and blessed spot to be privileged to live in!"

Legacy of Leadership

In 1920, Shoghi Effendi went to Oxford University in England. He was determined to learn all he could to serve the Faith.

The following year, his life changed dramatically. His beloved grandfather unexpectedly passed away. Devastated, Shoghi Effendi returned to Israel.

When the Master's will was read, Shoghi Effendi was shocked to learn that 'Abdu'l-Bahá had named him the Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith. At about age 24, he was the leader of the global Bahá'í community.

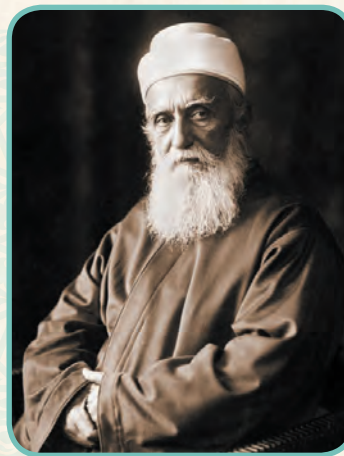
Faced with this immense responsibility, Shoghi Effendi retreated to the mountains of Switzerland to gain "health, strength, self-confidence and



March 1, 1897
Shoghi Effendi is born in 'Akká, Israel



1920-1921
Studies at Oxford University, England



November 28, 1921
Passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.
Shoghi Effendi becomes the Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith



April-December, 1922
Retreat to the mountains of Switzerland

“How vast is the Revelation of Bahá’u’lláh! How great the magnitude of His blessings showered upon humanity in this day!” —Shoghi Effendi

spiritual energy.” He climbed and hiked, some days walking 25 miles (40 km). After eight months he returned home, feeling renewed.

Shoghi Effendi jumped into action and encouraged Bahá’ís to share the Faith around the globe. He wrote, “Let us arise to teach His Cause with righteousness, conviction, understanding and vigor . . . Let us scatter to the uttermost corners of the earth . . .”

Bahá’ís met with Shoghi Effendi and visited Bahá’í holy places. He inspired them and talked about the growth of the Faith. Under his leadership, countries and territories with Bahá’ís grew from 35 to 254.

One Bahá’í he met was Mary Maxwell, a young woman from Canada. They talked about the power of the Bahá’í teachings. Shoghi Effendi even taught her Persian calligraphy. In 1937, they were married. Shoghi Effendi gave his wife a new name—Amatu’l-Bahá

Rúhiyyih Khánum. He called her “my tireless collaborator.”

His Kind Heart

“He was fundamentally a very tender-hearted person” and expressed this kindness “in many ways,” Rúhiyyih Khánum said. He shared loving gifts and messages, and he gave financial help to the poor. In peaceful moments, he had “a delightful sense of humor” and his eyes would “dance with amusement.”

Shoghi Effendi had amazing energy and drive, working from early morning until late each night. He wrote thousands of letters and created plans for teaching the Faith worldwide. He sent messages to Bahá’í junior youth and signed them, “Your true brother, Shoghi.”

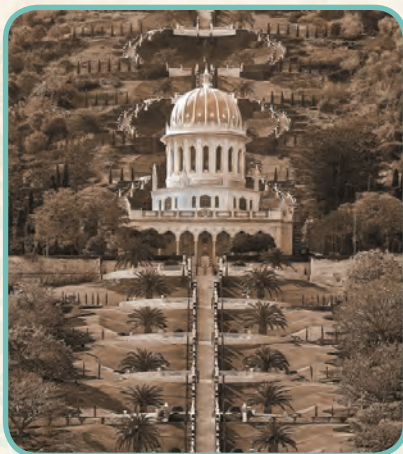
Shoghi Effendi envisioned plans for the Bahá’í World Centre, the spiritual and administrative heart

of the Faith, in Israel. Its focal point is the Shrine of the Báb. He asked his father-in-law, architect Sutherland Maxwell, to design a magnificent superstructure to surround the original shrine. It was completed in 1953.

In 1957, Shoghi Effendi became ill during a trip to London, England. Then suddenly, on November 4, he passed away at age 60.

Bahá’ís gathered to honor the Guardian with prayers in many languages. His gravesite, near London, is a place of prayer and meditation.

In 1963, the national Bahá’í governing bodies of the world elected the first Universal House of Justice. Shoghi Effendi said that this nine-member council will enable the “light” of the Bahá’í Faith to “illumine the whole earth.” It is elected every five years to guide Bahá’ís in establishing global peace and justice.



March 25, 1937

Marriage to Amatu’l-Bahá Rúhiyyih Khánum

1944

Publishes *God Passes By*, a history of the first Bahá’í century

1953

Shrine of the Báb completed on Mount Carmel

November 4, 1957

Shoghi Effendi passes away in London, England

April 1963

Election of the first Universal House of Justice