

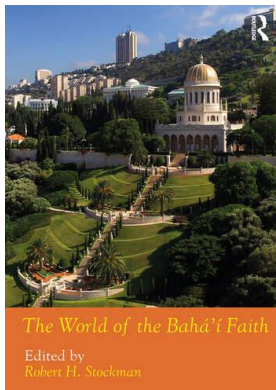
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10

THE PERSIAN WRITINGS OF SHOGHI EFFENDI¹

Mina Yazdani

Shoghi Effendi (1897–1957) was appointed by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá (1844–1921) as the head of the Bahá’í religion and the authorized expounder of its Writings. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá gave him the title ‘Guardian of the Cause of God’ (*Valiyy-i-Amru’lláh*) (Momen 2011). Throughout the thirty-six years of his ministry, Shoghi Effendi communicated with Bahá’ís around the world chiefly through his writings. He wrote in three languages: Persian, Arabic, and English. His works in Persian are in the form of letters addressed to Bahá’í institutions (Spiritual Assemblies, both national and local, and their committees), Bahá’í communities (often as large as encompassing all the ‘Bahá’ís of the East’), and individuals.² Over 9,000 unique works of his in Persian have been identified, comprising over 2.1 million words (Research Department 2020).³ These works range from cables of a few words to extensive letters nearly a hundred pages in length. Major letters to institutions and communities were usually written by him directly, while most of the letters addressed to individuals and institutions with specific guidance, often in response to questions, were drafted by his secretaries and reviewed and approved by him before being dispatched.⁴ His Persian prose has been described as ‘at once clear, powerful and exquisitely beautiful’. It has been reported that ‘several unbiased Persian scholars’ compared Shoghi Effendi’s Persian prose to that of the famous thirteen-century poet and writer Sa’dí of Shiraz (Nakhjavání 2006: 278). His Persian writings are often interspersed with Arabic passages of equal eloquence.⁵ Most of these Arabic passages are either inspirational praises of the Divine or expressions of affection directed to the addressees—usually found at the beginning of a letter—or devotional passages and short invocations that occur at the end of some letters. Extracts from the Persian writings of Shoghi Effendi are available in English translations authorized by the Bahá’í World Centre, yet the overwhelming majority of his Persian writings have not yet been translated into English. His main letters in Persian will no doubt be translated into English by the Bahá’í World Centre in due time (Research Department 1994). A comparison between the English and Persian writings of Shoghi Effendi has been carried out by ‘Alí Nakhjavání (2006: 295–300). In the pages that follow, some of the distinctive features of his writings in Persian will be discussed.

Shoghi Effendi wrote his first letter to the Bahá’ís of Iran on 19 January 1922, just a few days after the first emotionally exhausting month of his return to Haifa—following the passing of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá—had come to an end. He addressed them via the members of Tehran’s Spiritual Assembly (the city’s elected Bahá’í governing body), expressed intense sorrow over the passing of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá—a theme which, together with expressions of devotion to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá,

remained a recurring one in his writings—and asked them for their prayers for confirmation to promote the Faith (Shoghi Effendi 129/1972–73a: 1–2). During the next ten weeks, before departing on 5 April 1922 for Europe in order to recuperate and meditate,⁶ Shoghi Effendi began educating Persian-speaking Bahá'ís about the administrative processes of the Faith. In so doing, he laid the groundwork for the burgeoning institutions of the Bahá'í Administrative Order while consolidating those that had been established earlier. In separate letters to the Spiritual Assemblies of Tehran and Mumbai and to the Bahá'ís of Khorasan, he provided detailed instructions about the formation of Assemblies, their functions, and their relationship with the believers. As a national Spiritual Assembly in Iran had not yet been established, he decided that the Central Assembly of Tehran should temporarily oversee other Spiritual Assemblies and administer the affairs of the entire country. For India and Burma, he determined that all the local Spiritual Assemblies should report to the executive committee of the annual convention of the country (Shoghi Effendi 129/1972–73a: 3–8, 9–12). Then, on 16 December 1922, the day after his return from Europe to Haifa, he wrote the first of what would become many letters over the years to a large multi-national audience: the Bahá'ís of the East (to be discussed later in this chapter).

To appreciate the size and magnitude of his Persian communications with Bahá'í institutions, communities, and individuals, suffice it to mention that between 11 and 15 January 1923, he wrote separate letters addressing the Spiritual Assemblies of the following cities or individual Bahá'ís living in or around these cities: Tehran, Rasht, Isfahan, Shiraz, Qazvin, Tabriz, Hamadan, Barfurush, Yazd, Kerman, Sangisar, Kashan, Qum, Sultan-Abad, Mashhad, and Kermanshah (Shoghi Effendi 129/1972–73a: 46–96). These letters include the following core themes: expressions of encouragement; guidance on various issues, including defining the relationship between the Spiritual Assemblies and the believers; the importance of consultation; the need to live a Bahá'í life; the importance of unity; exhortations to teach the Bahá'í Faith; and consolation for those suffering persecution, counselling them to remain steadfast.

Due to constraints of space in this chapter, a discussion of Shoghi Effendi's letters to individuals and single Assemblies is put aside in favour of a more salient category of his letters in Persian: namely, collective letters addressed to the Bahá'ís of the East.

Collective letters to the Bahá'ís of the East

As previously mentioned, Shoghi Effendi wrote a letter addressed to the Bahá'ís of Iran, Caucasus, Turkistan, India, Egypt, 'and other regions of the East' on 16 December 1922, the day after his return to Haifa from Europe. This was the first of many collective letters, usually quite long, to various communities of Bahá'ís in the 'East'.⁷ It is important to note that while not all the addressees of these letters were Persian speaking and included Arabs and Turks, among others, and while he was fluent and wrote eloquently in Arabic, when it came to writing collective letters to the communities in the 'East', Shoghi Effendi chose Persian as the main language of communication, perhaps because the majority of recipients were Persian speaking. He, of course, wrote in Arabic when addressing exclusively Arab communities. An example is his 23 December 1922 letter to the Bahá'ís of Port Said (Shoghi Effendi 129/1972–73a: 30–31). In addition to their language, audience, and length, these major letters shared other similarities that justify considering them a distinct category. Until Naw-Rúz 88 BE/1931, these letters were written either sporadically when he wanted to inform Bahá'ís about a new development (Shoghi Effendi 129/1972–73a: 21–29, 99–108, 114–140, 158–179, 226–237, 238–251, 252–257, 287–299, 305–317; Shoghi Effendi 129/1972–73b: 1–25, 25–40, 47–68, 94–126, 127–149) or to commemorate the anniversary of the ascension of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, as was the

case with the fourth anniversary in November 1925 (Shoghi Effendi 129/1972–73a: 262–263), the sixth anniversary in November 1927 (Shoghi Effendi 129/1972–73b: 47–68), and the eighth anniversary in November 1929 (Shoghi Effendi 129/1972–73b: 127–149). Beginning 88 BE/1931, he began writing long collective letters on Naw-Rúz or Riḍván. The only exceptions to this pattern were the two letters written on the occasion of special events: the 3 *Shahru'l-Kalimát* 89 BE/15 July 1932 letter written on the ascension of the Greatest Holy Leaf (Shoghi Effendi 129/1972–73b: 295–320) and the 14 *Shahru'l-Masá'il* /25 December 1939 letter written on the occasion of the transfer of the remains of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's mother and brother to Mount Carmel (Shoghi Effendi 129/1972–73b: 295–320).⁸ With the exception of the Naw-Rúz 101 letter, written in commemoration of the first hundred years of the Bahá'í religion in Iran, which can be considered a shorter version of *God Passes By* in Persian (Rabbání 1969: 224; Nakhjavání 2006: 197, 277, 298, 299), and the Naw-Rúz 113 letter, which mostly dealt with the persecution of the Bahá'ís in Iran in 1955, these long letters contain almost ubiquitous themes which can be categorized as follows:

Encouraging and empowering

In almost all his general letters to the Bahá'ís in the East, Shoghi Effendi encouraged them to be steadfast, to live the Bahá'í life, and to serve the Bahá'í religion. In doing so, he stirred their spiritual sensibilities using a variety of means, including the following: expressions of praise of the revelation of Bahá'u'lláh; statements of ardent love and dedication for 'Abdu'l-Bahá (see later in this chapter for more on this topic); direct admiring and confirming words for the believers and the services they render, often by quoting selections from the Writings of the Báb, Bahá'u'lláh, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá; and finally, by the creative use of a rhetorical device in which he cited Bahá'u'lláh's and 'Abdu'l-Bahá's imaginary words uttered from the Hereafter addressing their believers, in real time, exhorting them to cultivate an upright character and undertake initiatives and projects for the advancement of the Cause and the betterment of humanity (Shoghi Effendi 129/1972–73a: 159, 196, 227). A translation of a section of one such passage dated 19 December 1923 reads,

[‘Abdu'l-Bahá’s] eyes are now directed towards His grieved and afflicted ones. From His exalted station, He is addressing the people of Bahá in this world of dust, and conveying to them these exhortations:

‘O my loved ones. Be not grieved and disturbed. Be not listless, nor lose hope and feel distressed. I am with you. I am guarding you in the stronghold of My protection, and at every moment I send you a fresh measure of assistance and confirmation. Be ye faithful to His Cause, and like unto this Servant, be constant till your very last breath, in service to this Faith and in thralldom at His Threshold. Exert your utmost and vie ye with each other.

‘Be not saddened by My passing, nor afraid and unsettled by reason of the changes and chances of this world and its ever-checked conditions. Do not waver in the Cause of God. Ye are His hosts. Ye are the people of Bahá who are to face the storm of this ordeal, to evince meekness and tenacity, and be adorned with goodly deeds and the ornaments of purity and rectitude of conduct before the eyes of all men.

‘Arise to champion the Faith of God and lead this sombre, this afflicted and agitated world to the climax of eternal glory, under the shadow of the Cause of God, and the canopy of divine Salvation’.

(Nakhjavání 2006: 263–264; original text, Shoghi Effendi 129/1972–73a: 159)

Educating and informing

In almost all these letters, Shoghi Effendi educated his readers about the administrative principles of the Bahá'í religion and on the concepts and processes he developed and/or informed them about the developments in the Bahá'í world at large. This was almost invariably an integral theme of these letters. One of the most salient examples is the Riḍván 105 BE letter, in which Shoghi Effendi introduced the concepts of *kawr* (cycle), *dawr* (dispensation), *'aṣr* (age), and *'ahd* (epoch) and identified the distinctive eras of religious history, the cycles of prophecy and fulfilment, the three ages of the dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh, and the epochs of the Formative Age up to that time. He also elaborated on the concept of *Naẓm-i-Badí'* ('the New World Order'), the process of its emergence, and its relationship to the Covenant (Shoghi Effendi 125/1968–69: 99–188). Other examples are the Naw-Rúz 110 BE/1953 letter, in which he, among other things, lists the goals of the Ten-Year Crusade (Shoghi Effendi 119/1962–63: 26–119) and the Naw-Rúz 111 BE/1954 letter, in which he announces that women in the East can now also be elected as members of Spiritual Assemblies and informs Bahá'ís of the structural developments planned at the Bahá'í World Centre (Shoghi Effendi 119/1962–63: 123–198). The authorized translation of an excerpt from the letter follows, in which he connects those structures to his interpretation of passages from Bahá'u'lláh's Tablet of Carmel:

In this great Tablet which unveils divine mysteries and heralds the establishment of two mighty, majestic and momentous undertakings—one of which is spiritual and the other administrative, both at the World Centre of the Faith—Bahá'u'lláh refers to an 'Ark', whose dwellers are the men of the Supreme House of Justice, which, in conformity with the exact provisions of the Will and Testament of the Centre of the Mighty Covenant, is the body which should lay down laws not explicitly revealed in the Text. In this Dispensation, these laws are destined to flow from this Holy Mountain, even as in the Mosaic Dispensation the law of God was promulgated from Zion. The 'sailing of the Ark' of His laws is a reference to the establishment of the Universal House of Justice, which is indeed the Seat of Legislation, one of the branches of the World Administrative Centre of the Bahá'ís on this Holy Mountain. It will be housed in a separate building near the International Archives Building, now under construction, on a site in the neighbourhood of the Shrine of the Báb, and overlooking the sacred and illumined Monuments.

(Research Department 2003)

Providing vision

These letters of Shoghi Effendi provide his readers with insights into the history of the Bahá'í religion, its place in the history of the world, and, accordingly, the place of Bahá'ís in the world.

History is an omnipresent subject in Shoghi Effendi's writings. Many of his longer letters include an analytic summary of the history of the Bahá'í religion, varying in length from a few sentences to several pages. A salient example is the Naw-Rúz 88 BE letter, in which he devotes more than two-thirds of the text to recounting history, interspersed with relevant quotations from the Bahá'í Writings, establishing a direct relationship between opposition to the Bahá'ís and the inevitable triumph of their Cause (Shoghi Effendi 129/1972–73b: 159–193).

On a related note, in most of these letters, he provides analyses and interpretations of the conditions of the world and, in this context, discusses the role Bahá'ís are expected to play in the betterment of the world. This role requiring sacrifice, he therefore expounds on the meaning of

tests and tribulations suffered in the path of Bahá'u'lláh and the connection of the crises to the victory and spread of the Bahá'í Faith. In a letter dated 6 March 1925, addressed to the Bahá'ís of Iran, referring to the tests and trials they faced, he wrote,

Be not sorely grieved or dismayed. This is an effective means, preordained and irrevocable, which has been provided by the Causer of causes, through the operation of His immutable Will, and the exercise of His unquestionable power, and in the face of the machinations of every malicious opponent, so that the glory of His Cause may presently be unveiled before the assemblage of man and, in the days to come, His Faith may be rendered victorious and become securely established in that blessed land.

(Shoghi Effendi 1986: 33; for the original-language text, see Shoghi Effendi 129/1972–73a: 211)

Including prayers

Shoghi Effendi wrote many prayers in Persian and Arabic for which there are no counterparts in his writings in English. One study suggests that he wrote twenty prayers (Nakhjavání 2006: 277). The number may be higher if one considers the entreaties he included at the beginning or the end of some of his letters to the East. As with some of the prayers revealed by Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá which are embedded in their longer works, the prayers of Shoghi Effendi are interspersed in his letters. Similarly, they have been extracted and published independently (Shoghi Effendi 110/1954; Shoghi Effendi 152/1995). His prayers are mostly collective, supplicating divine assistance in the service to humanity, teaching Bahá'u'lláh's principles and spreading His message, the fulfilment of His promises, and, in some particular cases, asking for an end to persecutions, for the oppressors to be dealt with justice, and for the oppressed to be consoled. During his lifetime, Shoghi Effendi saw no necessity for the translation of his prayers into English. In the future, however, as the general messages that include his prayers are translated, his prayers will also become available in English (Research Department 1994).

In Shoghi Effendi's prayers, one finds a fascinating combination of supplication and historiography, or what might tentatively be called 'prayer-history', which appears to be a new, unique genre in Bahá'í liturgical literature. This genre is epitomized in his seminal letter of Riḍván 105 BE/1948 (Shoghi Effendi 125/1968–69: 99–188). Shoghi Effendi opens the seven-page-long prayer (101–107) with the invocation 'O All-Glorious Beloved', addressing Bahá'u'lláh. He then provides an account of some of the major events and processes in Bahá'í history in four pages (101–104), ascribing each occurrence to Bahá'u'lláh: Bahá'u'lláh was the one Who ultimately protected Bahá'ís despite all the imprisonment, plunder, bloodshed, oppression, and attacks; Who preserved the unity of His followers and the independence of His Faith; Who published His writings in more than fifty languages; Who established the foundation of His Administrative Order in ninety countries in the East and the West; Who brought the representatives of thirty ethnicities into the circle of His believers; Who convinced the thinkers of the world to respect and appreciate His teachings; Who caused to issue from the pen of a queen consort statements promoting His teachings;⁹ Who prompted the ulama of the highest institution of Sunni Islam to announce the separation and independence of the Bahá'í religion from Islam;¹⁰ Who fulfilled the prophecies of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas; Who established the spiritual and administrative centres of the Faith in 'Akká and on Mount Carmel; and Who planted the tree of the Faith, nourished it with love, and watered it with the blood of the martyrs. Next, Shoghi Effendi entreats Bahá'u'lláh, in the last two pages (105–107), to protect and promote His religion and fulfil His remaining promises of its victory. Similar combinations of prayer and history appear in some of Shoghi Effendi's other

prayers, albeit more concisely (e.g., Shoghi Effendi 129 B.E./1972–73a: 114–116; Shoghi Effendi 152 B.E./1995: 27–28). By ascribing the unfoldment of the major events and processes of Bahá'í history to Bahá'u'lláh in these works, Shoghi Effendi is, in fact, delineating his interpretation of the trajectory taken by Bahá'í history as the expression of the divine will.

Occasional passing references to historical events are made in the prayers of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá, in some instances alluding to the grand sweep of historical trends and in others to specific episodes of persecution of Bahá'ís in Iran (e. g., Bahá'u'lláh 123 BE/1966–67: 159–160; Abdu'l-Bahá 148 BE/1992: 385, 488–490, 403). In the writings of the Báb, one also finds prayers that contain autobiographical information (*Selections* 173–74, 180–82). However, incorporating a sequence of some of the major events of more than a century of Bahá'í history into a prayer, in the form described earlier, is a unique feature found only in the Persian writings of Shoghi Effendi, and as such, this feature seems to be a new genre in the liturgical literature of the Bahá'í religion. To what extent this genre has parallels in the literature of other religions is a subject for future research. In this connection, one is reminded of passages from the Psalms in which reference is made to historical events (e.g., Psalms 44: 2–8).

Outpourings of spiritual emotion

Another feature of Shoghi Effendi's Persian letters is the outpouring of spiritual emotions. The depth and strength of these emotions are especially evident in the frequent references to 'Abdu'l-Bahá in his writings dated to the early months of his ministry, shortly after the passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, as well as in the letters he penned successively over several years on the anniversary of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's passing.

In the letters he wrote to Bahá'ís early in his ministry, Shoghi Effendi often described the addressees by virtue of their relation to 'Abdu'l-Bahá and their dedication to Him. Thus, these letters open with such phrases as 'O, Friends [or 'loved ones'] of 'Abdu'l-Bahá' (129 BE/1972–73a: 1, 3) or a statement of the recipients' grief due to His loss (129/1972–73a: 262, 129/1972–73b: 47). He further invoked 'Abdu'l-Bahá in a number of prayers to render assistance for the success of His loved ones in their services, particularly their efforts in teaching the Bahá'í religion. Examples of such invocations and/or supplications are prayers written in a letter dated 27 November 1925, on the fourth anniversary of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's passing (Shoghi Effendi 129/1972–73a: 265–266) and another letter, dated November 1927 (Shoghi Effendi 129/1972–73b: 67–68). The authorized English translation of a section of the latter prayer reflects both the strength of the spiritual emotions involved and, to the extent possible, the beauty of the original Persian prose:

He is God! O mighty Lord! Thou seest what hath befallen Thy helpless lovers in this darkest of long nights; Thou knowest how, in all these years of separation from Thy Beauty, the confidants of Thy mysteries have ever been acquainted with burning grief.

O Powerful Master! Suffer not Thy wayfarers to be abased and brought low; succour this handful of feeble creatures with the potency of Thy might. Exalt Thy loved ones before the assemblage of man, and grant them strength. Allow those broken-winged beings to raise their heads and glory in the fulfilment of their hopes, that we in these brief days of life may gaze with our physical eyes on the elevation and exaltation of Thy Faith, and soar up to Thee with gladdened souls and blissful hearts. Thou knowest that, since Thy ascension, we seek no name or fame, that in this swiftly passing world we wish henceforth no joy, no delight and no good fortune. Then keep

Thy word, and exhilarate once more the lives of these, Thy sick at heart. Bring light to our expectant eyes, balm to our stricken breasts. Lead Thou the caravans of the city of Thy love swiftly to their intended goal. Draw those who sorrow after Thee into the high court of reunion with Thee. For in this world below we ask for nothing but the triumph of Thy Cause. And within the precincts of Thy boundless mercy we hope for nothing but Thy presence. Thou art the Witness, the Haven, the Refuge; Thou art He Who rendereth victorious this band of the innocent.

(Shoghi Effendi 1986: 35; Nakhjavání 2006: 265–266)

One finds the expression of his intense affection also in the letters he wrote after the passing of his great-aunt, the sister of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Bahíyyih Khánum, known among Bahá’ís as the Greatest Holy Leaf. In a letter dated 12 July 1932, addressing her most fondly and in a remarkably personal tone, Shoghi Effendi asks Bahíyyih Khánum for her intercession on his behalf at the threshold of Bahá’u’lláh (129/1972–73b: 209–210). His letter in English written on the same occasion, only five days later, is similarly laden with an outpouring of love and spiritual emotion, even if in less poetic language, except that here, he asks her to bear his message to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, praying that He will continue to assist him (Shoghi Effendi 1968: 195–196).

To these special instances of expression of intense emotions must be added the love Shoghi Effendi demonstrated for his fellow Bahá’ís. He frequently expressed his wish for his soul to be sacrificed for them (e.g., Shoghi Effendi 129/1972–73a: 141; Shoghi Effendi 119/1962–63: 192) or opened his letters with loving words such as the following:

O burning torches of love and affection! I send you my salutations from this sacred, luminous and radiant Spot. Your loving memory is always on my mind, filled as I am with joy as I receive your glad tidings. I rejoice at the vastness of your services, remember you in my prayers, and seek for every one of you perpetual confirmations from the Kingdom of Lights.

(free rendition in Nakhjavání 2006: 299; for the original text, see Shoghi Effendi 129/1972–73b: 127)

Publication of his Persian writings

While Shoghi Effendi began addressing Persian-speaking Bahá’ís as early as two weeks into his ministry, and while these letters were certainly made individually available to Bahá’ís as quickly as possible after their writing, collections of his letters were published many years later and often not in chronological order.¹¹ The first volume of his Persian works included excerpts from his letters, which ‘Alí-Akbar Furútan (d. 2003), the secretary of the national Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of Iran, selected and compiled. The Assembly sent the compilation to local Spiritual Assemblies as guidelines on various issues they faced (Shoghi Effendi 105/1948–49: 484). Even though the Persian translation of his English-language work *The Dispensation of Bahá’u’lláh* was published in 111 BE/1954–55, the next volume of his works, containing his letters—both the original Persian ones and Persian translations of some of his English letters from 109–114 BE (1952–57)—was not published until 119 BE/1962–63. His Naw-Rúz 101 letter to the Bahá’ís of the East, the abridged Persian version of *God Passes By*, was next to be published in 123 BE/1968–69. Two years later, another volume of both Persian letters and the translation of some of his English letters from 102–109 BE (1945–52) was published. Volumes containing the Persian letters he wrote in earlier years of his ministry were published even later; two volumes, one containing his letters from 1922 to 1926 and the other his letters from 1927 to 1939, were

published in 129 BE/1972–73, and a third volume containing other letters from 1922 to 1948 was published in 130 BE/1973–74. More recently, some of his Persian works have been re-published outside Iran.¹²

Conclusion

Shoghi Effendi's writings in Persian were his main instrument in administrating the affairs of the Bahá'í community in the East. He wrote collective letters to encourage the Bahá'ís, to inform and educate them, and to clarify their understanding of Bahá'í history and the role they were destined to play in the unfolding of the divine plan. He encouraged them to be steadfast in the face of persecution and to vindicate the truth of the Bahá'í religion by the rectitude of their conduct and the ardour of their desire to serve humanity. He educated them in matters concerning the administrative principles of the Bahá'í religion and informed them of its developments throughout the planet and at the Bahá'í World Centre, giving them a clear vision of his future plans. He instructed them on how to regard Bahá'í history as cycles of crisis and victory, which would ultimately lead Bahá'ís to play their proper role in the betterment of the world. In the prayers embedded in his letters, he enriched their devotional life and instilled in them a renewed consciousness of the active presence of spiritual forces in the world, and finally, in the outpouring of his spiritual emotion, he demonstrated to them that his strong leadership and administrative abilities were paired with a tender loving heart. His Persian writings were published years after they were first written and not in the order in which he wrote them, most likely due to the restrictions the Bahá'í community in Iran faced even at the time. Regardless of the time of their writing and publication, his Persian writings remain sources of guidance and inspiration from the 'Guardian of the Cause of God' and the authorized interpreter of the Bahá'í Writings for the current and future generations of Bahá'ís.

Notes

- 1 The author is grateful to Dr. Omid Rastegar-Ghaemmaghami for his comments on an earlier version of this chapter.
- 2 For more on the statistics of Shoghi Effendi's writings, see Nakhjavání 2006: 9; Rásikh, 1998: 40.
- 3 For an extensive discussion of the writings of Shoghi Effendi in Persian, see Fath-i-A'zam 2014; for an overview of his writings in Persian/Arabic, see Nakhjavání 2006: 253–279.
- 4 For examples of letters drafted by his secretaries, see Shoghi Effendi 110/1954.
- 5 For studies of Shoghi Effendi's Persian writings from a literary point of view, see Varqá 1993; Rásikh 1998; Ra'fatí 2000.
- 6 On this trip, see Rabbání 1969: 63.
- 7 He lists the countries or regions in some of his letters, while in others, he collectively addresses the believers and Assemblies in the 'East'. After the 1930s, Turkistan and Caucasus are not included. In 1950s, Iran, India, Burma, Pakistan, 'countries of Arabia', Egypt, Sudan, Turkey, Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon were addressed. In Naw-Rúz 111/1954, 'countries of Africa' are also included (Shoghi Effendi 119/1962–63: 123).
- 8 A collection of the most salient of these letters was republished in one volume in 1992. It includes the letters of Naw-Rúz 88, Riḍván 89, Naw-Rúz 101, Riḍván 105, Naw-Rúz 108, Naw-Rúz 110, Naw-Rúz 111, and Naw-Rúz 113 (excerpts only). See Shoghi Effendi 149/1992.
- 9 A reference to Queen Marie of Romania (d. 1938), the first crowned head to believe in Bahá'u'lláh, who published three testimonies advocating His teachings (see Shoghi Effendi 1950: 387–395).
- 10 For details, see Shoghi Effendi 1950: 364–366.
- 11 For a detailed description, see the editorial note at the beginning of Shoghi Effendi 130/1973–74.
- 12 See endnote viii.

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- ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. (148BE/1992) *Majmú‘iy-i-munájáthá*, Hofheim-Langenhain: Bahá’i-Verlag.
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