

GUARDIANSHIP-CLARITY OF THE COVENANT

The Institution of Guardianship - continued
Prepared by Brent Poirier, November 2016

THE CLARITY OF THE COVENANT

It is explained in the Baha'i Writings that some things in the divine scriptures are hidden, and some are manifest.

[The Kitab-i-Iqan 285](#)

Regarding the veiled language, Abdu'l-Baha said, "... the Words of God have innumerable significances and mysteries of meanings - each one a thousand and more." ([The Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 155](#)) The Writings invite us to gain our own understanding of the many meanings of such symbolic verses.

However, in one area of Baha'i sacred text - the appointment of the Head of the Faith we find only clarity, not veiled meanings. As we find in Section 8 of Unit One of Ruhi Book 8,

"One of the primary causes for the disagreements that spread in other religions, and which eventually split the ranks of their followers, was the lack of clarity over the question of succession. Bahá'u'lláh, however, safeguarded His community from such division by expressly calling on His followers to turn to 'Abdu'l-Bahá after His ascension. Succession was thus clearly defined at the outset. Further, at every subsequent stage in the unfoldment of the Faith, the same clarity has been present, and no room left for ambiguity in this respect."

(Ruhi Book 8, "The Covenant of Baha'u'llah, Unit 1, The Center of the Covenant and His Will and Testament)

This clarity is explored in depth in all three units of Ruhi Book 8.

Please observe this statement about the clarity of Baha'u'llah's explicit appointment of the Master as His Successor:

"The point at issue is clear, direct and of utmost brevity. Either Baha'u'llah was wise, omniscient and aware of what would ensue, or was ignorant and in error. He entered, by His supreme pen, into such a firm Covenant and Testament with all the Baha'is, first with the Aghsan, the Afnan and His kindred, and commanded them to obey and turn toward

Him. By His supreme pen He hath explicitly declared that the object of the following verse of the Kitab-i-Aqdas is the Most Great Branch: 'When the ocean of My presence hath ebbed and the Book of My Revelation is ended, turn your faces toward Him Whom God hath purposed, Who hath branched from this Ancient Root.'" ([Selections from the Writings of `Abdu'l-Baha, p. 213](#))

`Abdu'l-Bahá said that the designation of the Successor is not hidden, it is manifest:

"... For Christ has said that no one hides the lamp under a bushel.... Praise be to God! Bahá'u'lláh left nothing unsaid.... To protect and safeguard the religion of God from this and all other attack, the Center of the Covenant has been named and appointed by Bahá'u'lláh. Therefore, if anyone should set forth a statement in praise or recognition of another than this appointed Center, you must ask him to produce a written proof of the authority he follows." ([The Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 456](#))

Likewise, the Will and Testament of `Abdu'l-Bahá is in His own handwriting, and specifically identifies His Twin Successors, the Institutions of the Guardianship and the Universal House of Justice. As the Greatest Holy Leaf wrote:

"... that conclusive Text, the Will and Testament of `Abdu'l-Bahá, was given us, and what had been hidden at the beginning was made known at the end. His infinite grace became clearly manifest, and with His own mighty pen He made a perfect Covenant, naming Shoghi Effendi the Chosen Branch and Guardian of the Faith. Thus, by God's bounty, what had been a concealed mystery and a well-guarded secret, was at last made plain." ([From a letter by the Greatest Holy Leaf, "Bahiyiyih Khanum," p. 177](#))

`Abdu'l-Bahá expresses how clear is own Will is:

"O God my God! I call Thee, Thy Prophets and Thy Messengers, Thy Saints and Thy Holy Ones, to witness that I have declared conclusively Thy Proofs unto Thy loved ones and set forth clearly all things unto them, that they may watch over Thy Faith, guard Thy Straight Path and protect Thy Resplendent Law."
([The Will and Testament of Abdu'l-Baha, p. 22](#))

For the first time in religious history the faithful have a document directing them where to turn. Baha'u'llah, in His own handwritten Will designated His Successor by name and directed the believers to turn to Him, establishing, in the words of Shoghi Effendi, a Covenant with "no parallel in the Scriptures of any previous Dispensation." ([God Passes By, p. 238](#)). Abdu'l-Baha in His Will written in His own hand designated His twin successors - His hereditary successor the Guardianship, and He detailed how His elected successor, the Universal House of Justice, would be elected. He directed the believers to turn to them. ([Will and Testament, pp. 25-26](#))

Thus, the successors to Baha'u'llah - the Master, the Guardian and the Universal House of Justice - all stand on explicit written authority from the Head of the Faith.

There are more quotations from Shoghi Effendi about the uniqueness of the Baha'i Covenant here: [What is Unique about the Covenant of Baha'u'llah?](#)

THE GREATEST HOLY LEAF ON THE CLARITY OF THE COVENANT

The Greatest Holy Leaf beautifully described the clarity of the Master's Covenant:

"It appears from your letter that you had written prior to the receipt of the Will and Testament of the Centre of the Covenant. You have certainly perused it by now. This Text is His decisive decree; it constitutes the very life of those endued with understanding. In it the Pen of Bounty has set forth in the most powerful, comprehensive, clear and detailed manner the obligations devolving on every stratum of the Baha'i community, and has hacked out the tree of violation by its root, and has caused the centre of it [1] to be forlorn and disgraced. He has specifically named the centre to whom all must turn, thus solidly fixing and establishing the foundations of the Covenant, and has clearly appointed the centre, to whom all the people of Baha must direct themselves, the Chosen Branch, the Guardian of the Cause of God. This great bestowal is one of the special characteristics of this supreme Revelation, which of all Dispensations is the noblest and most excellent. Goodly be this to the steadfast, glad-tidings to the staunch, blessings to those who win the day. ([From a letter of the Greatest Holy Leaf, Bahiyiyh Khanum, p. 122](#))

[1] Mirza Muhammad-Ali, the Arch-breaker of the Covenant

And in another letter:

"Praised be God the Beloved that He has disclosed, through His invisible bounties and visible grace, such secrets, and drawn such veils aside. Words have taken on new meaning, and meaning itself has been adorned with the divine. A clear Covenant makes our duty plain; an explicit and lucid Text explains the revealed Book; a specifically named Centre has been designated, toward whom all must turn, and the pronouncement of him who is the Guardian of the Cause and the interpreter of the Book has been made the decisive decree. All this is out of the grace and favour of our Beloved, the All-Glorious, and the loving-kindness of Him from the splendours of Whose servitude earth and heaven were illumined." ([From a letter of the Greatest Holy Leaf, Bahiyyih Khanum, pp. 160-161](#))

More of the magnificent letters of the Greatest Holy Leaf which strengthen the friends in the Covenant can be read or downloaded here: [BAHÍYYIH KHÁNUM: The Greatest Holy Leaf](#)

GOD'S PROMISE OF DIVINE GUIDANCE TO THE GUARDIAN

A Covenant has two parts - God's part and humanity's part. We have read above, our own part, which is to turn to the twin institutions of the Guardianship and the Universal House of Justice. What is God's part of the Covenant? It is the Master's promise that the Bab ("the Exalted One") and Baha'u'llah ("the Abha Beauty") will infallibly guide these institutions:

"The sacred and youthful branch, the Guardian of the Cause of God, as well as the Universal House of Justice to be universally elected and established, are both under the care and protection of the Abha Beauty, under the shelter and unerring guidance of the Exalted One (may my life be offered up for them both). Whatsoever they decide is of God." ([The Will and Testament of Abdu'l-Baha, p. 11](#))

In a letter written on his behalf, Shoghi Effendi commented on this passage of the Will, explaining that it means that he is guided by both the Bab and Baha'u'llah:

"The Guardian's infallibility covers interpretation of the Revealed Word and its application. Likewise any

instructions he may issue having to do with the protection of the Faith, or its well-being must be closely obeyed, as he is infallible in the protection of the Faith. He is assured the guidance of both Bahá'u'lláh and the Báb, as the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá clearly reveals." ([From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, August 20, 1956; Lights of Guidance, p. 313, #1055](#))

As is explored in Unit Three of Ruhi Book 8, this same verse promises unfailing divine guidance to the Universal House of Justice.

The Guardian of the Cause is not only guided in matters of interpretation. He is guided to protect the Faith and in all of his actions he fosters its best interests:

"He is the Guardian of the Cause in the very fullness of that term, and the appointed interpreter of its teachings, and is guided in his decisions to do that which protects it and fosters its growth and highest interests."

([From a letter on behalf of Shoghi Effendi, Letters from the Guardian to Australia and New Zealand, p. 55](#))

To believe that the Guardian is divinely guided is simply to accept the promise - the Covenant - of Abdu'l-Baha. This is the heart of obedience to the Head of our Faith: Trusting Abdu'l-Baha.

One of the divine verses in the Master's Will is an admonition to ensure that Shoghi Effendi is never saddened. Here is an article about this verse, and of an eminent believer who built her life around carrying out this verse in every activity of her life: [The Hand of the Cause Who Dedicated Her Life To Making Shoghi Effendi Happy](#)

In Unit Two of Ruhi Book 8, "The Covenant of Baha'u'llah, The Guardian of the Faith," the participants read about the provisions of the Master's Will; of Shoghi Effendi's acceptance of his position, and his period of preparation for his duties; of the many institutions he raised up throughout the Baha'i world, including the fund, the Feast, the Mashriqu'l-Adhkar, the Spiritual Assembly, the summer school, the International Baha'i Council and the Hands of the Cause of God; of how he strengthened the Faith when it was attacked by Covenant-breakers; how he built up the worldwide Baha'i community through

a series of Plans; and how he wrote and translated a multitude of books of divine guidance. The participants in this Ruhi course are urged to develop a personal plan of study of the matchless writings of the beloved Guardian.

Another matchless source of information about the beloved Guardian, his character and the magnitude of his accomplishments for the Faith, is the book *The Priceless Pearl* by his devoted widow, the Hand of the Cause of God Amatu'l-Baha Ruhiyiyh Khanum.

http://bahai-library.com/khanum_priceless_pearl

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