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Persian Colony, Haifa

15-II-30 [sic]

Dear Dr. Locke:

Shoghi Effendi has been lately spending his leisure hours translating the Book of Iqan for he considers it to be the key to a true understanding of the Holy Scriptures, & [sic] can easily rank as one of the most, if not the most, important thing that Baha'u'llah revealed explaining the basic beliefs of the Cause. He who fully grasps the purport of that Book can claim to have understood the Cause.

Yet, Shoghi Effendi believes that mere translation into English phrases is not sufficient. It is essential to make the idioms & expressions lively English, a thing which he alone cannot possibly achieve. Thinking, therefore, that you will be the best fitted to render him an assistance along that line, he is sending you the part that he has already completed. He would be most appreciative if you go over it carefully, studying every sentence— its structure as well as choice of words— & giving him your criticism as well as constructive suggestions that would make it more lucid, English [sic] & forceful. As it is a Holy Scripture, Shoghi Effendi has tried to put it in the English of the Bible, preferring its ways of expression better than any other. What he sends you now is half of the book, the rest he will mail as it is translated.

The form that it is in at present is far from being the last one. Yet he wishes to have all the possible suggestions before he puts it in its final form.

Shoghi Effendi is fully aware of the many duties you have & how pressing your time is, & had he known of an equally fitting person he would surely have saved you the trouble. Yet he finds himself to be compelled. He hopes, therefore, that you will give this work your close attention.

If the book is completed & rendered into a lucid & forceful language, the service it will render to the Cause will surely repay all your endeavours. In many places you will see the same idea expressed in other words & inserted in paranthesis [sic]. You can chose [sic] any of the two. In case you have any suggestions just mention in what page & line it is. You need not send him back the copy after going over it, for he may desire to refer to them later. He has enough copies here. Though he wishes you to give it all your attention he will be much obliged if you take it up immediately.

With deepest appreciation

Yours ever sincerely

Ruhi Afnan

1930, July 5

Ruhi Afnan (on behalf of Shoghi Effendi) to Alain Locke, and Shoghi Effendi to

LockeSource: Alain Locke Papers, Box 164-10, Folder 2 (Afnan, Ruhi). Courtesy of the Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University, Washington, DC. This letter was first published in "Alain Locke: Bahá'í Philosopher," p. 49, republished in Alain Locke: Faith and Philosophy, p. 287.

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49 Persian Colony

Haifa, Palestine

5-7-30

Dear Prof. Locke:

Shoghi Effendi wishes me to acknowledge the receipt of your letter as well as the mss. of the Iqan which you had so kindly gone over. Though they were not so many, he found the suggestions you gave most helpful. In translation work the greatest difficulty is to give the thought a lively English expression. This is most difficult for the person who gets absorbed into the original form & is charmed with its beauty. Shoghi Effendi has already incorporated your suggestions & sent his manuscript to the National Assembly for publication. It naturally depends upon that body & the reviewing & publishing committees to decide whether it should come out immediately or not.

The most important service that can now be rendered to the Cause is to put the writings of Baha'u'llah in a form that would be presentable to the intellectual minds of the west. Shoghi Effendi's hope in this work has been to encourage others along this line.

In closing may I express Shoghi Effendi's best wishes for your health as well as for the services you are rendering to the Cause.

Yours ever sincerely

Ruhi Afnan

[Postscript in the Guardian's own hand:]

My dear co-worker:

I wish to add a few words expressing my deep appreciation of your valued suggestions in connexion with the translation of the Iqan. I wish also to express the hope that you may be able to lend increasing assistance to the work of the Cause, as I have always greatly admired your exceptional abilities & capacity to render distinguished services to the Faith. I grieve to hear of the weakness of your heart which I trust may through treatment be completely restored. I often remember you in my prayers and ever cherish the hope of welcoming you again in the Master's home.

Your true brother,

Shoghi

1935

Alain Locke, "Bahá'í Historical Record" cardSource: Bahá'í Historical Record Cards Collection, and Biographical Information Collection. Courtesy of the National Bahá'í Archives, Roger Dahl, Archivist. National Bahá'í Center, Wilmette, IL

This card was reproduced in Alain Locke: Faith and Philosophy, p. 58.

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1944, January 17

Shoghi Effendi to Alain Locke, Western Union cablegramSource: Alain Locke Papers, Box 164-12, Folder 3 (Bahá'í World). Original manuscript in Alain Locke Papers, Box 164-106, Folder 22 ([re: Bahá'í revelation of principles]). Courtesy of the Moorland-Spingarn Research Center, Howard University, Washington, DC. See also: Research Department, "References to Dr. Alain Locke in Letters Written on Behalf of Shoghi Effendi" (Enclosure). Courtesy of the Universal House of Justice to Christopher Buck, 16 July 2001. This cablegram was first published in "Alain Locke: Bahá'í Philosopher," p. 39, republished in Alain Locke: Faith and Philosophy, p. 189.

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Formatted 2010-08-03 by Jonah Winters.

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