

Study questions to The Promised Day is Come

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In 1941, in the midst of the Second World War, Shoghi Effendi addressed to the Bahá'ís of the West a long letter, *The Promised Day is Come*. In it he explained and clarified the meaning of the crisis of this age. "The powerful operations of this titanic upheaval", he elucidates, "are comprehensible to none except such as have recognized the claims of both Bahá'u'lláh and the Báb. Their followers know full well whence it comes, and what it will ultimately lead to."

In 119 pages, Shoghi Effendi outlines the significance of Bahá'u'lláh's mission and the response it evoked. In letters to "emperors, kings and princes, chancellors and ministers, the Pope himself, priests, monks and philosophers, the exponents of learning, parliamentarians and deputies, the rich ones of the earth, the followers of all religions", Bahá'u'lláh proclaimed His message and unfolded before the rulers of the world the Plan of God destined to create a revolution in people's attitudes and actions, and the construction of a global civilisation.

How does Shoghi Effendi summarize the general theme of this letter? (p. 111-112)

1. What are the dual purposes of the titanic upheaval in the world? (p. 4; see WOB, p. 170)
2. What are "these great oppressions" preparing the world for? (p. 5)
3. Describe the relationship between the Most Great Civilization, the Most Great Justice, and the Most Great Peace. (p. 7) What is the Great Peace mentioned in opening sentence of *The Promise of World Peace*?
4. What were the charges made against the Faith? (p. 7) What is eclecticism? How does it differ from syncretism? How would you answer these charges? What is the nature of the charges most recently made against the Faith in Iran? Which institutions and groups of people do you think will attack the Faith in the future?
5. List the principal persecutions inflicted on the Báb during His Ministry. (p. 8)
6. What persecution was inflicted on Bahá'u'lláh when He arose to champion the cause of the Báb? (pp. 10-11)
7. What were the principal features of the tribulations suffered by Bahá'u'lláh during the period subsequent to His exile to Baghdád? (p. 12)
8. Describe the suffering endured by 'Abdu'l-Bahá. (p. 13)
9. What were the characteristics of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's presentation of the Faith in the West? (p. 15; see GPB, pp. 281-282; UD, p. 35) What are the Faith's fundamental verities and distinguishing features? With what qualities and in what manner should we present the Faith to others? (see PBA, p. 25)
10. What is the state of the world? (p. 16; see ADJ, p. 47; WOB, pp. 187-188)

- Name some recent examples of these themes? What is the direct offspring of irreligion? (p. 16; see WOB, p. 187) Why is there a need for religion?
11. What is the sole refuge of our civilization? What will its institutions become? (p. 17)
 12. What is the dual phenomenon occurring in this age? (p. 17) What examples of both do you see today?
 13. Whom must primarily bear the responsibility for the trials which have afflicted the Faith? (p. 18)
 14. From whom has power been seized? (p. 20)
 15. List the sovereigns specifically addressed to by Bahá'u'lláh. (pp. 20, 49)
 16. What are the principal themes of the *Særiy-i-Mœlœk*? (pp. 21-25; see GPB, p. 171)
 17. What is the significance of the ? (p. 25; see GPB, pp. 186-188; also see LOG I, p. 37)
 18. In the Tablet of Queen Victoria, what were the kings summoned to cleave? What is the distinction between it and the Most Great Peace? (p. 26; see GPB, pp. 206-207)
 19. What does Bahá'u'lláh disclose to the Christian kings? (p. 27; see St. John's Gospel, 14:3, 14:28, 16:13)
 20. What did Bahá'u'lláh prophesy for Napoleon's kingdom and empire? (p. 30; see GPB, p. 207)
 21. What did Bahá'u'lláh call on Pope Pius IX to do? (pp. 31-32; see GPB, p. 209)
 22. Who do the monks call "at eventide and dawn"? (p. 32; see St. Matthew's Gospel, 6:9, 7:21) What does Bahá'u'lláh say about the "Word"? (p. 32; see St. John's Gospel, 1:1, 16:13) How does Shoghi Effendi interpret this? (p. 52)
 23. For what actions was Queen Victoria commended? (p. 35)
 24. What was Bahá'u'lláh's remarkable prophecy concerning Germany? (p. 37; see GPB, p. 208)
 25. For what does Bahá'u'lláh reprove Emperor Francis Joseph? (p. 37)
 26. In what manner was Sultán 'Abdu'l-'Azíz advised to help his people? (p. 38)
 27. What must Sultán 'Abdu'l-'Azíz do so that "the light of God can shed its radiance on his heart"? (p. 39)
 28. What was the purpose of Bahá'u'lláh's imprisonment? (p. 42; see *Gleanings*, XLV)
 29. What subjects are touched upon in the Tablets mentioned so far? (p. 45)
 30. Why did Bahá'u'lláh close "His eyes to His own well-being"? (p. 47; see question 28; also see ADJ, p. 28)
 31. When and how did the process of world upheaval have its inception? (p. 49)
 32. What was the response of Napoleon III, Queen Victoria and Násiri'd-Dín Sháh to Bahá'u'lláh's Tablets? What fate befell them? (pp. 51-52, 65, 65-68)
 33. What fate befell Pope Pius IX, Czar Alexander III, the Houses of Hapsburg and 'Uthmán, and Sultán 'Abdu'l-'Azíz? (pp. 53-55, 56, 59, 62, 63-64)
 34. List the principle features of the pontificate of Pope Pius IX. (p. 53)

35. What was the significance of Czar Alexander II in the history of nineteenth century Russia? (p. 56)
36. Of what nation does Shoghi Effendi say "war indeed became a religion"? (p. 58)
37. Who were the "archenemies of God's infant Faith"? (p. 60)
38. What was Bahá'u'lláh's prophecy concerning Constantinople, and how was it fulfilled? (pp. 40, 64-65)
39. What is the Bahá'í attitude towards the institution of kingship? (pp. 71-74)
40. Which group of people "hoisted the standard of revolt" against the Faith? (p. 75)
41. What factors will produce an acceleration in the process of decline of the ecclesiastical institutions in the world? (p. 75)
42. Who is the Sháh-Bahrám? (p. 77; see GPB, p. 95 for this and other titles)
43. What is the prophecy in the Zoroastrian Scriptures concerning their high priests in this age? (p. 77)
44. What is the relationship of the Faith to Islám? (p. 78; see ADJ, p. 49)
45. What are the reasons for the attitude of the leaders of religion toward the Faith? (p. 79)
46. What did Bahá'u'lláh desire of the Muslim leaders in Baghdád? (p. 85; see GPB, p. 144)
47. Who does Bahá'u'lláh call ""? (pp. 86-87)
48. Why was ""? (pp. 88-89)
49. What misfortunes did 'Abdu'l-Bahá predict would overtake the ecclesiastical hierarchies of Sunní and Shí'ih Islám? (p. 90)
50. In what manner did the Shí'ih hierarchy in Persia virtually collapse? (pp. 91-93)
51. What distinguished the revolution in Turkey from that which occurred in Persia? (p. 95)
52. What happened to the Islámic world in the wake of the dissolution of the Caliphate? (pp. 97-98)
53. Which ecclesiastical orders of Christendom did Bahá'u'lláh address? (p. 100)
54. Compare the crises which have come to the Islámic and Christian ecclesiastical institutions. (p. 103) Compare them today.
55. What are the evidences of the decline in the fortunes of the Christian ecclesiastical orders? By what has this been aided, reinforced, and stimulated? (pp. 103-104) Do you see similar decline today?
56. What "dethroned Islám"? (p. 105)
57. Describe one of the ways in which the conversion of the masses could have been brought about during the time of Bahá'u'lláh? (p. 107)
58. What is the essential and cardinal truth of the Faith? (p. 107; see WOB, pp. 114, 57-58)
59. What claim of religion does Bahá'u'lláh repudiate? (p. 108)
60. What "basic principle" does Bahá'u'lláh inculcate? (p. 108) What is progressive revelation? (see GPB, p. 100 for a definition; see WOB, pp. 57, 102, 114, 115, 118; Statement to the United Nations Special Committee on

Palestine, July 1947 in Call to the Nations, XI-XVII) What evidence exists in the Scriptures of the revealed religions for this belief? (see Hebrews 1:1; St John's Gospel 5:44, 16:12; Acts 3:19-22; 1 Cor 3:2; Isaiah 28) Where does Bahá'u'lláh proclaim this principle? (see GPB, p. 139) How would your explanation of this principle differ to a religious person compared to an atheist?

61. What is the Faith's attitude to the Sonship and Divinity of Jesus Christ? (p. 109) How would you present this to Christians? (see Michael Sours, Understanding Biblical Evidence, pp. 4-6, 52-60) How does this differ from a belief in the deity of Jesus and the incarnation of God? What evidence exists in the recorded utterances of Jesus that indicate His Divinity and not His Deity? (see St. John's Gospel, 12:44, 12:49, 14:28, 6:36; St. Luke's Gospel, 18:19; St. Mark's Gospel, 13:32)

62. What are "but manifestations of the quickening power" released by Christ's Spirit? (p. 110)

63. What are the essential prerequisites of admittance into the Bahá'í fold of agnostics and atheists? (p. 110) Bearing in mind the condemnation of ecclesiastics (see questions 40, 45, 48), what is the attitude of Bahá'ís toward religious leaders? Which attributes are respected? (pp. 110-111)

64. How should "this great retributive calamity" affecting the world be regarded? (pp. 112-114)

65. List the "three false gods of mankind" described by Shoghi Effendi. (p. 113) To what extent are they still being worshipped?

66. What are the signs of moral downfall in the world? (p. 115) Have they increased or decreased since Shoghi Effendi wrote this letter?

67. What are the dual purposes of the Divine Justice which has come to the world during the past century? (pp. 115-116)

68. Of what is the tumult of this age of transition characteristic? (p. 117)

69. What is the final stage in the organic evolution of mankind on this planet? (p. 118; see WOB, pp. 163, 43)

70. What will serve as the pattern and nucleus of the future world commonwealth? (p. 118)

71. Upon what theme did the Christian Revelation primarily focus attention? (p. 119) What biblical verses support this statement? In what way is the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh associated with this theme?

72. What is the fundamental distinction between the Mission of Jesus Christ and that of Bahá'u'lláh? (p. 119) (for other distinctions, see WOB, pp. 21-22) What effect will these distinctions have on the development of the Bahá'í Faith?

73. What was the contribution of Islám to the evolution of human society? (p. 120; see UD, p. 456)

74. What are "the seven candles of unity"? (p. 121)

75. What are Bahá'í teachings concerning patriotism and loyalty to one's country? (p. 122; see WOB, pp. 41-42)

76. Why do the Bahá'í teachings insist on the subordination of national considerations? (p. 122)

77. What will come in the wake of the Lesser Peace? (p. 123)

Notes

[*] Some questions are reprinted by kind permission from A Study Guide to the Promised Day is Come by Dr. Peter Khan.

[**] The edition used is the third edition, 1980, published by the Bahá'í Publishing Trust, Wilmette.

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