

The following story is from the book

The Central Figures

Bahá'u'lláh

Volume Three



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. . . His mission is to proclaim
that the stages of the infancy
and of the childhood of the
human race are past,
that the convulsions associated
with the present stage
of its adolescence are slowly
and painfully preparing it
to attain the stage of manhood,
and are heralding the approach
of that Age of Ages
when swords will be beaten
into plowshares, when the
Kingdom promised by Jesus Christ
will have been established,
and the peace of the planet
definitely and permanently ensured.

— **Shoghi Effendi**, *The Promised Day is Come*, p. v

An Eagle-Eye View



*Written by Rick Johnson
Photography by Pepper Oldziey*

Dawn was very excited! Tomorrow was Naw-Rúz, the Bahá'í New Year, and she was part of a very special surprise for the whole community. Everyone knew that something mysterious was going to happen at the community Naw-Rúz celebration, but no one knew what.

Naw-Rúz, March 21st, was a highlight of the year for Dawn. It reminded her that spring was coming and was a perfect end to the Fast.

The Fast was one of Dawn's favorite things about growing up in a Bahá'í family. For 19 days her parents didn't eat or drink from sunrise to sunset. Although children under 15 weren't required to fast, Dawn, who was 13, and her younger brother, Jahan, who was 11, chose to eat a pre-dawn breakfast with their parents, and then fast all the way to lunchtime—which was still a long time for them! Dawn liked the feeling of being part of a special time when everyone in the family was focused especially on spiritual thoughts.

*Image of Shoghi Effendi courtesy
of the United States Bahá'í Archives.
Image of the Shrine of the Báb
in 1909 courtesy of the
Audio-Visual Department
of the Bahá'í World Center*



The Eagle atop the grave of the Guardian, Shoghi Effendi, near London, England

She looked forward to the first morning of the Fast when their mother always woke them up by singing a special song: “Wake up, Jahan. Wake up, Dawn. Wake up and praise Bahá’u’lláh.” She sang this little verse softly, in her beautiful voice, to the accompaniment of a small drum, until they awoke.

Dawn could not remember a time when she had not joined the family gathered around the table for a pre-dawn meal. After a few prayers, the family would finish preparing breakfast, everyone working together, and then eat. There would be a small, delicious sweet at each place—the only time during the year when the children were allowed sweets for breakfast.

Sometimes Dawn mumbled, “Let me sleep,” when her mother came to get her. But her protests would die away when she learned that Papa had made honeycream peaches or baked strawberry tarts for breakfast. And, when she reached the kitchen and saw the family together, with beautiful music playing, and twinkling lights strung up around the breakfast nook, who wanted to sleep?

Dawn thought the Fast was the most joyous Bahá’í month of the year. At the end of the Fast came Naw-Rúz. Dawn’s family never ate the last Fast meal alone. They would always invite others—especially new friends—to end the Fast with them. And tonight, some new friends were present to end the Fast with Dawn’s family.

As the sun went down, the family, with their guests, quenched their thirst for the last time with delicious fruit juice, and offered prayers of thanksgiving to Bahá’u’lláh that He had blessed the family through another year.

Then, there was a wonderful meal. And the sweets! Dawn liked her family’s special traditions at Naw-Rúz: pastry stuffed with pistachios, almonds, and raisins—all drenched in lemon-sugar syrup; compote of stewed apricots, figs, prunes, and raisins; and lots of nuts and whipped cream. Family and friends stuffed themselves, and then sat around telling stories and singing, while she and Jahan ran to the houses of neighbors, distributing beautiful origami birds they had made. That night, Dawn could barely sleep; she was so excited about the celebration of Naw-Rúz—tomorrow!

At last, tomorrow came, and it was time for the community celebration. As everyone filed into the large and beautiful Bahá’í Center, Dawn said goodbye to her mother and Jahan, as she and her Papa slipped away. “We’ll see you later,” she said happily, disappearing behind the stage.

After the devotional program, Ms. Bates, Dawn's teacher, came onstage and said, "I am pleased to introduce the youth class presenting a performance entitled: 'An Eagle Eye View.' We have been studying the Station of Bahá'u'lláh and the significance of His Revelation. 'An Eagle-Eye View' is our way of exploring how Shoghi Effendi showed his love for Bahá'u'lláh through his service as Guardian of the Faith."

The lights in the Center went down, and a single spotlight shone on Jaleh Jefferson, standing at the left of the stage. "One of the characteristics that Shoghi Effendi possessed was an immense love for Bahá'u'lláh and a complete devotion to serving His Cause," she announced. Jaleh turned to her left, sweeping her arm toward the center of the stage as lights came on to illuminate a large model of the Earth, perhaps eight feet in diameter.

Other members of the youth class encircled the Earth. Each one had a hand extended to hold onto the globe. All the youth had signs hanging around their necks. Callie Simmons was front and center, so hers was easiest to read: **"Head of Independent Religion."**

"When Shoghi Effendi, Bahá'u'lláh's great-grandson, became Guardian, people often did not fully understand that the Bahá'í Faith was an independent world religion," she began. "'Abdu'l-Bahá Himself, though widely-loved and respected, was not known as the Head of an independent religion, but rather was often regarded as a Muslim Holy Man. The young Guardian no longer gave the appearance that the Faith was a sect of Islam. He did not attend services at the mosque, as 'Abdu'l-Bahá had done. Through this act, and many others, Shoghi Effendi showed that the Bahá'í Faith is an independent religion."

*Photograph of Shoghi Effendi
courtesy of the U.S. Bahá'í Archives*



*The grave of the Guardian,
Shoghi Effendi, near London, England*

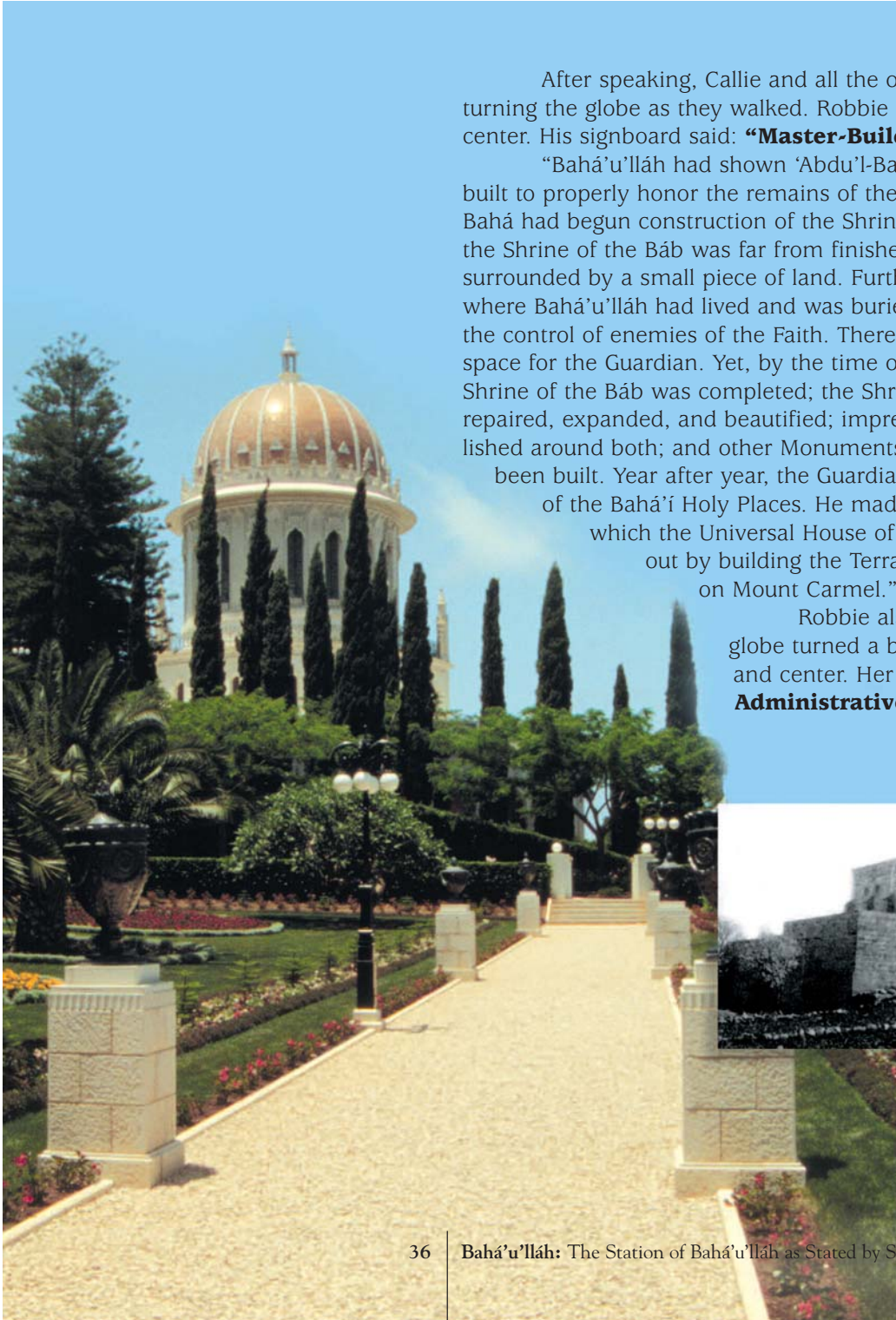


Bahá'u'lláh: The Station of Bahá'u'lláh as Stated by Shoghi Effendi

After speaking, Callie and all the other youth stepped to the right, turning the globe as they walked. Robbie Nichols was now front and center. His signboard said: **“Master-BUILDER of the World Center.”**

“Bahá’u’lláh had shown ‘Abdu’l-Bahá where a Shrine should be built to properly honor the remains of the Báb,” he said, “and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had begun construction of the Shrine. But when the Master died, the Shrine of the Báb was far from finished—it had only six rooms surrounded by a small piece of land. Further, the Mansion of Bahjí, where Bahá’u’lláh had lived and was buried, was run down and under the control of enemies of the Faith. There was not even a proper office space for the Guardian. Yet, by the time of the Guardian’s passing, the Shrine of the Báb was completed; the Shrine of Bahá’u’lláh had been repaired, expanded, and beautified; impressive gardens had been established around both; and other Monuments and an Archives Building had been built. Year after year, the Guardian increased the size and beauty of the Bahá’í Holy Places. He made other plans for the future, which the Universal House of Justice has continued to carry out by building the Terraces and finishing other projects on Mount Carmel.”

Robbie also stepped to the right, and the globe turned a bit more, bringing Liu Jing front and center. Her sign read, **“Architect of the Administrative Order.”**



The Shrine of the Báb in 1909, Haifa, Israel, courtesy of the Audio-Visual Department of the Bahá’í World Center.

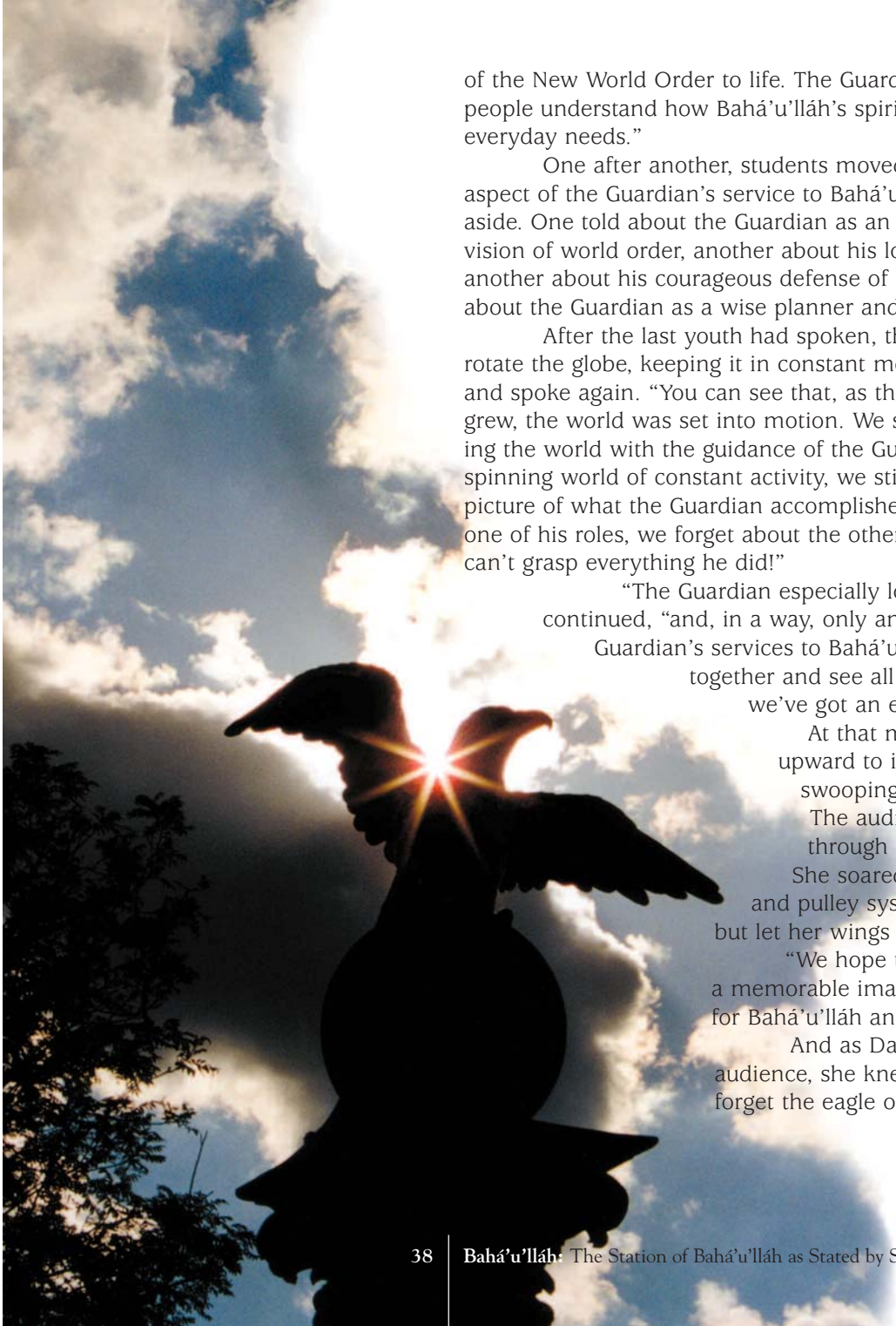


“The Administrative Order of the Bahá’í Faith, which was ordained by Bahá’u’lláh, and further described by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, was built by Shoghi Effendi,” she said. “When the Master passed away, there were only a few Spiritual Assemblies, and only one national body working on a limited level. However, under the wise and loving guidance of the Guardian, the widely-scattered followers of Bahá’u’lláh from many different backgrounds took shape as an organized community. They were guided by an ever-increasing number of Assemblies at the local and national levels and many other institutions such as the Hands of the Cause, all functioning with love and efficiency. He had also laid the groundwork for the election of the Universal House of Justice in the future.”

As Liu Jing, in her turn, stepped to the right, Tyrone Walker came to the center. His sign read, **“Author and Interpreter.”**

“Shoghi Effendi gave us many gifts with what he wrote or translated. Most of the best-loved Writings of Bahá’u’lláh became known in English because of the wonderful translations of the Guardian. Books such as the Hidden Words and the Book of Certitude gave new understanding of Bahá’u’lláh’s Message to the Western world. And in thousands of letters, he brought Bahá’u’lláh’s vision

*The Seat of the Universal House of Justice,
Mount Carmel, Haifa, Israel*



of the New World Order to life. The Guardian's letters helped people understand how Bahá'u'lláh's spiritual Teachings relate to everyday needs."

One after another, students moved to the center, told about an aspect of the Guardian's service to Bahá'u'lláh, and then stepped aside. One told about the Guardian as an historian, another about his vision of world order, another about his loving hospitality to pilgrims, another about his courageous defense of the Faith. A final one told about the Guardian as a wise planner and a "true brother" to all.

After the last youth had spoken, they all worked together to rotate the globe, keeping it in constant motion. Jaleh stepped forward and spoke again. "You can see that, as the services of the Guardian grew, the world was set into motion. We see the Bahá'is visibly moving the world with the guidance of the Guardian. Yet, even with this spinning world of constant activity, we still don't truly see the whole picture of what the Guardian accomplished. As we take a close look at one of his roles, we forget about the others. Our limited minds simply can't grasp everything he did!"

"The Guardian especially loved the eagle," Jaleh continued, "and, in a way, only an 'eagle-eye view' of the Guardian's services to Bahá'u'lláh allows us to put it all together and see all his services at once. So, we've got an eagle!"

At that moment, the spotlight swung upward to illuminate a large eagle swooping across the stage: Dawn!

The audience cheered as she sailed through the air, wings spread wide. She soared over the stage on a wire and pulley system that held her securely, but let her wings flap beautifully.

"We hope this eagle will leave you with a memorable image of what the Guardian did for Bahá'u'lláh and all of us."

And as Dawn sailed high over the audience, she knew she would certainly never forget the eagle or this Naw-Rúz! ★