

# Universal Language, Adoption of

by Bahá'u'lláh, Abdu'l-Bahá, Shoghi Effendi and Universal House of Justice

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The significant summons issued to the Presidents of the Republics of the American continent to seize their opportunity in the Day of God and to champion the cause of justice; the injunction to the members of parliaments throughout the world, urging the adoption of a universal script and language...

*(Shoghi Effendi, Summary, The Kitab-i-Aqdas, p. 15)*

Were We to address Our theme by speaking in the language of the inmates of the Kingdom, We would say: "In truth, God created that School ere He created heaven and earth, and We entered it before the letters B and E were joined and knit together."

*(Bahá'u'lláh, The Kitab-i-Aqdas, p. 84)*

O members of parliaments throughout the world! Select ye a single language for the use of all on earth, and adopt ye likewise a common script. God, verily, maketh plain for you that which shall profit you and enable you to be independent of others. He, of a truth, is the Most Bountiful, the All-Knowing, the All-Informed. This will be the cause of unity, could ye but comprehend it, and the greatest instrument for promoting harmony and civilization, would that ye might understand!

*(Bahá'u'lláh, The Kitab-i-Aqdas, p. 88)*

Bahá'u'lláh enjoins the adoption of a universal language and script. His Writings envisage two stages in this process. The first stage is to consist of the selection of an existing language or an invented one which would then be taught in all the schools of the world as an auxiliary to the mother tongues. The governments of the world through their parliaments are called upon to effect this momentous enactment. The second stage, in the distant future, would be the eventual adoption of one single language and common script for all on earth.

*(Bahá'u'lláh, The Kitab-i-Aqdas, p. 250)*

It is evident unto thee that the Birds of Heaven and Doves of Eternity speak a twofold language. One language, the outward language, is devoid of allusions, is unconcealed and unveiled; that it may be a guiding lamp and a beaconing light whereby wayfarers may attain the heights of holiness, and seekers may advance into the realm of eternal reunion. Such are the unveiled traditions and the evident verses already mentioned. The other language is veiled and concealed, so that whatever lieth hidden in the heart of the malevolent may be made manifest and their innermost being be disclosed. Thus hath Sadiq, son of Muhammad, spoken: "God verily will test them and sift them." This is the divine standard, this is the Touchstone of God, wherewith He proveth His servants. None apprehendeth the meaning of these utterances except them whose hearts are assured, whose souls have found favour with God, and whose minds are detached from all else but Him. In such utterances, the literal meaning, as generally understood by the people, is not what hath been intended. Thus it is recorded: "Every knowledge hath seventy meanings, of which one only is known amongst the people. And when the Qa'im shall arise, He shall reveal unto men all that which remaineth." He also saith: "We speak one word, and by it we intend one and seventy meanings; each one of these meanings we can explain."

*(Bahá'u'lláh, The Kitab-i-Iqan, p. 254)*

The day is approaching when all the peoples of the world will have adopted one universal language and one common script. When this is achieved, to whatsoever city a man may journey, it shall be as if he were entering his own home. These things are obligatory and absolutely essential. It is incumbent upon every man of insight and understanding to strive to translate that which hath been written into reality and action....

*(Bahá'u'lláh, The Proclamation of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 115)*

We trust that God will assist the kings of the earth to illuminate and adorn the earth with the refulgent

light of the Sun of Justice. At one time We spoke in the language of the Law, at another time in the language of the Truth and the Way; and the ultimate object and remote aim was the showing forth of this high supreme station. And God sufficeth for witness.

O friends, consort with all the people of the world with joy and fragrance. If there be to you a word or essence whereof others than you are devoid, communicate it and show it forth in the language of affection and kindness: if it be received and be effective the object is attained, and if not leave it to him, and with regard to him deal not harshly but pray. The language of kindness is the lodestone of hearts and the food of the soul; it stands in the relation of ideas to words, and is as an horizon for the shining of the Sun of Wisdom and Knowledge.

*(Abdu'l-Bahá, A Traveller's Narrative, p. 43)*

The differences in language cause disunion between nations. There must be one universal language. The diversity in Faiths is also a cause of separation. The true foundation of all faiths must be established, the outer differences abolished. There must be a Oneness of Faith. To end all these differences is a very hard task. The whole world is sick, and needs the power of the Great Healer.

*(Abdu'l-Bahá, Abdu'l-Bahá in London, p. 60)*

Another asked why the teachings of all religions are expressed largely by parables and metaphors and not in the plain language of the people.

Abdu'l-Bahá replied: — “Divine things are too deep to be expressed by common words. The heavenly teachings are expressed in parable in order to be understood and preserved for ages to come. When the spiritually minded dive deeply into the ocean of their meaning they bring to the surface the pearls of their inner significance. There is no greater pleasure than to study God's Word with a spiritual mind.”

*(Abdu'l-Bahá, Abdu'l-Bahá in London, p. 79)*

A friend enquired concerning Bahá'u'lláh's prophecy in the Words of Paradise, that a universal language would be formed, and desired to know if Esperanto would be the language chosen.

“The love and effort put into Esperanto will not be lost,” he answered, “but no one person can construct a Universal Language. It must be made by a Council representing all countries, and must contain words from different languages. It will be governed by the simplest rules, and there will be no exceptions; neither will there be gender, nor extra and silent letters. Everything indicated will have but one name. In Arabic there are hundreds of names for the camel! In the schools of each nation the mother tongue will be taught, as well as the revised Universal Language.”

*(Abdu'l-Bahá, Abdu'l-Bahá in London, p. 94)*

A universal language shall be adopted and be taught by all the schools and institutions of the world. A committee appointed by national bodies of learning shall select a suitable language to be used as a medium of international communication. All must acquire it. This is one of the great factors in the unification of man.

*(Abdu'l-Bahá, Bahá'í World Faith - Abdu'l-Bahá Section, p. 241)*

The teachers traveling in different directions must know the language of the country in which they will enter. For example, a person being proficient in the Japanese language may travel in Japan, or a person knowing the Chinese language may hasten to China, and so forth.

*(Abdu'l-Bahá, Bahá'í World Faith - Abdu'l-Bahá Section, p. 428)*

Every one will need but two languages, his national tongue and the universal language. All will acquire the international language.

*(Abdu'l-Bahá, Divine Philosophy, p. 26)*

In order to facilitate complete understanding between all people, a universal auxiliary language will be adopted and in the schools of the future two languages will be taught—the mother tongue and this international auxiliary tongue which will be either one of the existing language or a new language made up of words from all the languages—the matter is to be determined by a confederation met for the purpose which shall represent all tribes and nations. This international tongue will be used in the work of the parliament of man—a supreme tribunal of the world which will be permanently established in order to arbitrate international questions. The members of this arbitral court of justice will be representatives

of all the countries. It is incumbent upon the nations to obey the commands of this tribunal, for such a tribunal will be under the power of God and for the protection of all men. In all the sacred books where do you find such a statement?

*(Abdu'l-Bahá, Divine Philosophy, p. 84)*

His Holiness BAHÁ'O'LLAH declared that complete union between the various nations of the world would remain an unrealized dream until an international language was established.

Misunderstandings keep people from mutual association and these misunderstandings will not be dispelled except through the medium of a common ground of communication. Every intelligent man will bear testimony to this.

The people of the Orient are not fully informed of the events in the west and the west cannot put itself into sympathetic touch with the east. Their thoughts are enclosed in a casket. The universal language will be the master key to open it. Western books will be translated into that language and the east will become informed of the contents; likewise eastern lore will become the property of the west. Thus also will those misunderstandings which exist between the different religions be dispersed. Religious prejudices play havoc among the peoples and bring about warfare and strife and it is impossible to remove them without a common medium.

*(Abdu'l-Bahá, Divine Philosophy, p. 143)*

Therefore every one of us must study this language and make every effort to spread it, so that each day it may receive a wider recognition, be accepted by all nations and governments of the world and become a part of the curriculum of all the public schools. I hope that the business of the future international conferences and congresses will be carried on in Esperanto.

In the coming ages, two languages will be taught in the schools, one the native tongue, the other an international auxiliary language. Consider today how difficult is human communication. One may study fifty languages and travel through a country and still be at a loss. I myself speak several Oriental languages, but know no western tongue. Had this universal language pervaded the globe, I should have studied it and you would have been directly informed of my thoughts and I of yours and a special friendship would have been established between us.

*(Abdu'l-Bahá, Divine Philosophy, p. 145)*

And among the teachings of His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh is the origination of one language that may be spread universally among the people. This teaching was revealed from the pen of Bahá'u'lláh in order that this universal language may eliminate misunderstandings from among mankind.

*(Abdu'l-Bahá, Foundations of World Unity, p. 29)*

One of the great steps towards universal peace would be the establishment of a universal language. Bahá'u'lláh commands that the servants of humanity should meet together, and either choose a language which now exists, or form a new one. This was revealed in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas forty years ago. It is there pointed out that the question of diversity of tongues is a very difficult one. There are more than eight hundred languages in the world, and no person could acquire them all.

The races of mankind are not isolated as in former days. Now, in order to be in close relationship with all countries it is necessary to be able to speak their tongues.

A universal language would make intercourse possible with every nation. Thus it would be needful to know two languages only, the mother tongue and the universal speech. The latter would enable a man to communicate with any and every man in the world!

A third language would not be needed. To be able to talk with a member of any race and country without requiring an interpreter, how helpful and restful to all!

Esperanto has been drawn up with this end in view: it is a fine invention and a splendid piece of work, but it needs perfecting. Esperanto as it stands is very difficult for some people.

An international Congress should be formed, consisting of delegates from every nation in the world, Eastern as well as Western. This Congress should form a language that could be acquired by all, and every country would thereby reap great benefit.

Until such a language is in use, the world will continue to feel the vast need of this means of intercourse.

Difference of speech is one of the most fruitful causes of dislike and distrust that exists between nations, which are kept apart by their inability to understand each other's language more than by any other reason.

If everybody could speak one language, how much more easy would it be to serve humanity!

*(Abdu'l-Bahá, Paris Talks, p. 155)*

The seventh candle is unity of language, i.e., the choice of a universal tongue in which all peoples will be instructed and converse. Each and every one of these will inevitably come to pass, inasmuch as the power of the Kingdom of God will aid and assist in their realization.

*(Abdu'l-Bahá, Selections from the Writings of Abdu'l-Bahá, p. 32)*

And among the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh is the origination of one language that may be spread universally among the people. This teaching was revealed from the pen of Bahá'u'lláh in order that this universal language may eliminate misunderstandings from among mankind.

*(Abdu'l-Bahá, Selections from the Writings of Abdu'l-Bahá, p. 301)*

Today the greatest need of the world of humanity is discontinuance of the existing misunderstandings among nations. This can be accomplished through the unity of language. Unless the unity of languages is realized, the Most Great Peace and the oneness of the human world cannot be effectively organized and established because the function of language is to portray the mysteries and secrets of human hearts. The heart is like a box, and language is the key. Only by using the key can we open the box and observe the gems it contains. Therefore, the question of an auxiliary international tongue has the utmost importance. Through this means international education and training become possible; the evidence and history of the past can be acquired. The spread of the known facts of the human world depends upon language. The explanation of divine teachings can only be through this medium. As long as diversity of tongues and lack of comprehension of other languages continue, these glorious aims cannot be realized. Therefore, the very first service to the world of man is to establish this auxiliary international means of communication. It will become the cause of the tranquillity of the human commonwealth. Through it sciences and arts will be spread among the nations, and it will prove to be the means of the progress and development of all races. We must endeavor with all our powers to establish this international auxiliary language throughout the world. It is my hope that it may be perfected through the bounties of God and that intelligent men may be selected from the various countries of the world to organize an international congress whose chief aim will be the promotion of this universal medium of speech.

*(Abdu'l-Bahá, The Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 60)*

Ninth, a universal language shall be adopted and be taught by all the schools and institutions of the world. A committee appointed by national bodies of learning shall select a suitable language to be used as a medium of international communication. All must acquire it. This is one of the great factors in the unification of man.

*(Abdu'l-Bahá, The Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 182)*

Diversity of languages has been a fruitful cause of discord. The function of language is to convey the thought and purpose of one to another. Therefore, it matters not what language man speaks or employs. Sixty years ago Bahá'u'lláh advocated one language as the greatest means of unity and the basis of international conference. He wrote to the kings and rulers of the various nations, recommending that one language should be sanctioned and adopted by all governments. According to this each nation should acquire the universal language in addition to its native tongue. The world would then be in close communication, consultation would become general, and dissensions due to diversity of speech would be removed.

*(Abdu'l-Bahá, The Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 232)*

Be seekers of light, no matter from which lantern it shines forth. Be not lovers of the lantern. At one time the light has shone from a lantern in the East, now in the West. If it comes from North, South, from whatever direction it proceeds, follow the light. Let me illustrate further. A certain person bestowed a coin upon five beggars. They resolved to spend it for food. The Englishman said, "Buy grapes." The Turk wanted uzum, the Arab anab, the Greek stafi'li, the Persian angur. Not understanding each other's language, they quarreled and fought. A stranger came along. He was familiar with all five languages. He

said, "Give me the coin; I will buy what you wish." When he brought them grapes, they were all satisfied. They wanted the same thing but differed in the term only. Briefly, when reality dawns in the midst of the religions, all will be unified and reconciled.

*(Abdu'l-Bahá, The Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 248)*

Bahá'u'lláh has proclaimed the adoption of a universal language. A language shall be agreed upon by which unity will be established in the world. Each person will require training in two languages: his native tongue and the universal auxiliary form of speech. This will facilitate intercommunication and dispel the misunderstandings which the barriers of language have occasioned in the world. All people worship the same God and are alike His servants. When they are able to communicate freely, they will associate in friendship and concord, entertain the greatest love and fellowship for each other, and in reality the Orient and Occident will embrace in unity and agreement.

*(Abdu'l-Bahá, The Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 300)*

Eleventh, one language must be selected as an international medium of speech and communication. Through this means misunderstandings will be lessened, fellowship established and unity assured.

*(Abdu'l-Bahá, The Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 318)*

Bahá'u'lláh has announced the necessity for a universal language which shall serve as a means of international communication and thus remove misunderstandings and difficulties. This teaching is set forth in the Kitab-i-Aqdas ("Most Holy Book") published fifty years ago.

*(Abdu'l-Bahá, The Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 434)*

It beseemeth you and the other officials of the Government to convene a gathering and choose one of the divers languages, and likewise one of the existing scripts, or else to create a new language and a new script to be taught children in schools throughout the world. They would, in this way, be acquiring only two languages, one their own native tongue, the other the language in which all the peoples of the world would converse. Were men to take fast hold on that which hath been mentioned, the whole earth would come to be regarded as one country, and the people would be relieved and freed from the necessity of acquiring and teaching different languages.

*(Bahá'u'lláh, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, p. 138)*

Consider the differences that have arisen since the days of Adam. The divers and widely-known languages now spoken by the peoples of the earth were originally unknown, as were the varied rules and customs now prevailing amongst them. The people of those times spoke a language different from those now known. Diversities of language arose in a later age, in a land known as Babel. It was given the name Babel, because the term signifieth "the place where the confusion of tongues arose."

Subsequently Syriac became prominent among the existing languages. The Sacred Scriptures of former times were revealed in that tongue. Later, Abraham, the Friend of God, appeared and shed upon the world the light of Divine Revelation. The language He spoke while He crossed the Jordan became known as Hebrew (Ibrani), which meaneth "the language of the crossing." The Books of God and the Sacred Scriptures were then revealed in that tongue, and not until after a considerable lapse of time did Arabic become the language of Revelation....

Witness, therefore, how numerous and far-reaching have been the changes in language, speech, and writing since the days of Adam. How much greater must have been the changes before Him!

*(Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 173)*

The third Glad-Tidings concerneth the study of divers languages. This decree hath formerly streamed forth from the Pen of the Most High: It behoveth the sovereigns of the world—may God assist them—or the ministers of the earth to take counsel together and to adopt one of the existing languages or a new one to be taught to children in schools throughout the world, and likewise one script. Thus the whole earth will come to be regarded as one country. Well is it with him who hearkeneth unto His Call and observeth that whereunto he is bidden by God, the Lord of the Mighty Throne.

*(Bahá'u'lláh, Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 22)*

Second: Languages must be reduced to one common language to be taught in all the schools of the world.

*(Bahá'u'lláh, Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 89)*

The sixth Ishraq is union and concord amongst the children of men. From the beginning of time the light of unity hath shed its divine radiance upon the world, and the greatest means for the promotion of that unity is for the peoples of the world to understand one another's writing and speech. In former Epistles We have enjoined upon the Trustees of the House of Justice either to choose one language from among those now existing or to adopt a new one, and in like manner to select a common script, both of which should be taught in all the schools of the world. Thus will the earth be regarded as one country and one home. The most glorious fruit of the tree of knowledge is this exalted word: Of one tree are all ye the fruit, and of one bough the leaves. Let not man glory in this that he loveth his country, let him rather glory in this that he loveth his kind. Concerning this We have previously revealed that which is the means of the reconstruction of the world and the unity of nations. Blessed are they that attain thereunto. Blessed are they that act accordingly.

*(Bahá'u'lláh, Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 127)*

Likewise He saith: Among the things which are conducive to unity and concord and will cause the whole earth to be regarded as one country is that the divers languages be reduced to one language and in like manner the scripts used in the world be confined to a single script. It is incumbent upon all nations to appoint some men of understanding and erudition to convene a gathering and through joint consultation choose one language from among the varied existing languages, or create a new one, to be taught to the children in all the schools of the world.

The day is approaching when all the peoples of the world will have adopted one universal language and one common script. When this is achieved, to whatsoever city a man may journey, it shall be as if he were entering his own home. These things are obligatory and absolutely essential. It is incumbent upon every man of insight and understanding to strive to translate that which hath been written into reality and action.

*(Bahá'u'lláh, Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 165)*

A world language will either be invented or chosen from among the existing languages and will be taught in the schools of all the federated nations as an auxiliary to their mother tongue. A world script, a world literature, a uniform and universal system of currency, of weights and measures, will simplify and facilitate intercourse and understanding among the nations and races of mankind

*(Compilations, The Compilation of Compilations vol II, p. 185)*

Consort with all men, O people of Baha, in a spirit of friendliness and fellowship. If ye be aware of a certain truth, if ye possess a jewel, of which others are deprived, share it with them in a language of utmost kindness and good-will. If it be accepted, if it fulfil its purpose, your object is attained. If any one should refuse it, leave him unto himself, and beseech God to guide him. Beware lest ye deal unkindly with him. A kindly tongue is the lodestone of the hearts of men. It is the bread of the spirit, it clotheth the words with meaning, it is the fountain of the light of wisdom and understanding....

*(Baha'u'llah, "Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh", p. 289; "Epistle to the Son of the Wolf", p. 15)*

Regarding the subject of Esperanto; it should be made clear to the believers that while the teaching of that language has been repeatedly encouraged by Abdu'l-Bahá, there is no reference either from Him or from Bahá'u'lláh that can make us believe that it will necessarily develop into the international auxiliary language of the future. Bahá'u'lláh has specified in His Writings that such a language will either have to be chosen from one of the existing languages, or an entirely new one should be created to serve as a medium of exchange between the nations and peoples of the world. Pending this final choice, the Bahá'ís are advised to study Esperanto only in consideration of the fact that the learning of this language can considerably facilitate intercommunication between individuals, groups and Assemblies throughout the Bahá'í world in the present stage of the evolution of the Faith.

*(From letter written on behalf of the Guardian to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada, June 4, 1937: Bahá'í News, No. 109, July 1937, p. 1; Directives from the Guardian, p. 26)*

Regarding the whole question of an International Language and its relation to the Faith: We, as Bahá'ís, are very anxious to see a universal auxiliary tongue adopted as soon as possible; we are not the protagonists of any one language to fill this post. If the governments of the world agree on an existing language, or a constructed, new tongue, to be used internationally, we would heartily support it because we desire to see this step in the unification of the human race take place as soon as possible.

Esperanto has been in wide use, more so than any similar language, all over the world, and the Bahá'ís have been encouraged by both the Master and the Guardian to learn it and to translate Bahá'í literature into it. We cannot be sure it will be the chosen language of the future; but as it is the one which has spread most, both East and West, we should certainly continue to cooperate with its members learn to speak it, and translate Bahá'í literature into it.

*(Shoghi Effendi through his Secretary, Directives from the Guardian, p. 39)*

The Bahá'í Faith recognizes the unity of God of His Prophets, upholds the principle of an unfettered search after truth, condemns all forms of superstition and prejudice, teaches that the fundamental purpose of religion is to promote concord and harmony, that it must go hand-in-hand with science, and that it constitutes the sole and ultimate basis of a peaceful, an ordered and progressive society. It inculcates the principle of equal opportunity, rights and privileges for both sexes, advocates compulsory education, abolishes extremes of poverty and wealth, exalts work performed in the spirit of service to the rank of worship, recommends the adoption of an auxiliary international language, and provides the necessary agencies for the establishment and safeguarding of a permanent and universal peace.

*(Shoghi Effendi, June 1933, from a letter written by Shoghi Effendi to the High Commissioner for Palestine; Extracts from the USBN)*

Some of the weightiest passages of His Epistle to Queen Victoria are addressed to the members of the British Legislature, the Mother of Parliaments, as well as to the elected representatives of the peoples in other lands. In these He asserts that His purpose is to quicken the world and unite its peoples; refers to the treatment meted out to Him by His enemies; exhorts the legislators to “take counsel together,” and to concern themselves only “with that which profiteth mankind”; and affirms that the “sovereign remedy” for the “healing of all the world” is the “union of all its peoples in one universal Cause, one common Faith,” which can “in no wise be achieved except through the power of a skilled and all-powerful and inspired Physician.” He, moreover, in His Most Holy Book, has enjoined the selection of a single language and the adoption of a common script for all on earth to use, an injunction which, when carried out, would, as He Himself affirms in that Book, be one of the signs of the “coming of age of the human race.”

*(Shoghi Effendi, “God Passes By”, p. 211)*

“In 1920,” is the declaration made in his testament by the distinguished Swiss scientist and psychiatrist, Dr. Auguste Forel, “I learned at Karlsruhe of the supraconfessional world religion of the Bahá'ís, founded in the Orient seventy years ago by a Persian, Bahá'u'lláh. This is the real religion of 'Social Welfare' without dogmas or priests, binding together all men of this small terrestrial globe of ours. I have become a Bahá'í. May this religion live and prosper for the good of humanity! This is my most ardent desire.” “There is bound to be a world state, a universal language, and a universal religion,” he, moreover has stated, “The Bahá'í Movement for the oneness of mankind is, in my estimation, the greatest movement today working for universal peace and brotherhood.”

*(Shoghi Effendi, God Passes By, p. 375)*

He would not advise you to teach them Esperanto, as we have no way of knowing whether it will ultimately be chosen as the auxiliary language of the world. He thinks the most direct and quickest way of communicating with them in a common tongue should be chosen; in other words either you should learn their language or they yours, whichever will yield the quickest results.

*(Shoghi Effendi, High Endeavours - Messages to Alaska, p. 6)*

I assure you of my deepest interest in this fresh field of Bahá'í enterprise, and of my great desire to promote in such parts of the Bahá'í world as present circumstances permit the study of an international language which is of such an obvious and practical utility to our steadily advancing Cause.

*(Shoghi Effendi, The Light of Divine Guidance v I, p. 25)*

As to your suggestion regarding a more widespread use of the Esperanto among the Bahá'ís as a medium of correspondence. Shoghi Effendi, as you know, has been invariable encouraging the believers, both in the East and in the West, to make an intensive study of that language, and to consider it as an important medium for the spread of the Cause in international circles. He has been specially urging the friends to have the Cause well represented in all Esperanto Congresses and associations, and by this means cultivate greater friendship and cooperation between them and the Esperantists.

But in this connection, he feels, he must make it clear that although the Cause views with much sympathy and appreciation the activities which the Esperantists are increasingly initiating for the spread of their language, yet it considers that the adoption of the Esperanto by the entire world is by no means an inevitable fact. Neither Bahá'u'lláh, nor even 'Abdu'l-Bahá, ever stated that Esperanto will be the international auxiliary language. The Master simply expressed the hope that it may, provided certain conditions were fulfilled, develop into such a medium.

*(24 December 1935, Shoghi Effendi, The Light of Divine Guidance v II, p. 34)*

There is no reason to doubt that the phenomenal progress achieved within the span of a few years, amidst an alien people, and in such distant and backward territories, will be duplicated, nay surpassed, among people of the same race, speaking the same language, of the same background, and living in such close proximity to the Administrative Centre in the British Isles, provided that a determination no less unyielding, and a dedication no less whole-hearted and complete, will be displayed by those who have already won such memorable victories in such far-off and inhospitable regions of the globe.

*(Shoghi Effendi, The Unfolding Destiny of the British Bahá'í Community, p. 370)*

A world metropolis will act as the nerve center of a world civilization, the focus towards which the unifying forces of life will converge and from which its energizing influences will radiate. A world language will either be invented or chosen from among the existing languages and will be taught in the schools of all the federated nations as an auxiliary to their mother tongue. A world script, a world literature, a uniform and universal system of currency, of weights and measures, will simplify and facilitate intercourse and understanding among the nations and races of mankind. In such a world society, science and religion, the two most potent forces in human life, will be reconciled, will cooperate, and will harmoniously develop.

*(Shoghi Effendi, The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 203)*

In addition to projects to be initiated at the World Centre, these ideas include:

Calling upon local and national Bahá'í communities to sponsor a wide range of activities which will engage the attention of people from all walks of life to various topics relevant to peace, such as: the role of women, the elimination of racism, the eradication of prejudice, the promotion of education, the extension of social and economic development, the adoption of a world auxiliary language, the establishment of world government;

Mounting a publicity campaign which will make use of such themes as “world peace through world religion,” “world peace through world education,” “world peace through world language,” “world peace through world law”—a campaign which could lead to discussion of these subjects in small or large gatherings, at local or national levels, and perhaps in collaboration with organizations promoting such ideas;

*(The Universal House of Justice, Messages 1963 to 1986, p. 653; A Wider Horizon, Selected Letters 1983-1992, p. 31)*

A fundamental lack of communication between peoples seriously undermines efforts towards world peace. Adopting an international auxiliary language would go far to resolve this problem and necessitates the most urgent attention.

*(The Universal House of Justice, Messages 1963 to 1986, p. 689)*

In the Bahá'í view, recognition of the oneness of mankind “calls for no less than the reconstruction and the demilitarization of the whole civilized world—a world organically unified in all the essential aspects of its life, its political machinery, its spiritual aspiration, its trade and finance, its script and language, and yet infinite in the diversity of the national characteristics of its federated units.” (WOB, p. 43.)

*(The Universal House of Justice, Messages 1963 to 1986, p. 690)*

Within the Bahá'í World Commonwealth “all nations, races, creeds and classes” will be “closely and permanently united,” and “the autonomy of its state members and the personal freedom and initiative of the individuals that compose them” will be “definitely and completely safeguarded. This commonwealth must, as far as we can visualize it, consist of a world legislature, whose members will, as the trustees of the whole of mankind, ultimately control the entire resources of all the component nations, and will enact such laws as shall be required to regulate the life, satisfy the needs and adjust the relationships of all races and peoples. A world executive, backed by an international Force, will carry out the decisions

arrived at, and apply the laws enacted by, this world legislature, and will safeguard the organic unity of the whole commonwealth. A world tribunal will adjudicate and deliver its compulsory and final verdict in all and any disputes that may arise between the various elements constituting this universal system. ... A world metropolis will act as the nerve centre ..., the focus towards which the unifying forces of life will converge and from which its energizing influences will radiate.” The world commonwealth will include a system of international communication; an international auxiliary language; a world script and literature; a uniform and universal system of currency, weights, and measures; and an integrated economic system with co-ordinated markets and regulated channels of distribution. See also World Order of Bahá'u'lláh.

*(The Universal House of Justice, Messages 1963 to 1986, p. 734)*

The independent search after truth, unfettered by superstition or tradition; the oneness of the entire human race, the pivotal principle and fundamental doctrine of the Faith; the basic unity of all religions; the condemnation of all forms of prejudice, whether religious, racial, class or national; the harmony which must exist between religion and science; the equality of men and women, the two wings on which the bird of human kind is able to soar; the introduction of compulsory education; the adoption of a universal auxiliary language; the abolition of the extremes of wealth and poverty; the institution of a world tribunal for the adjudication of disputes between nations; the exaltation of work, performed in the spirit of service, to the rank of worship; the glorification of justice as the ruling principle in human society, and of religion as a bulwark for the protection of all peoples and nations; and the establishment of a permanent and universal peace as the supreme goal of all mankind - these stand out as the essential elements of that Divine polity which He proclaimed to leaders of public thought as well as to the masses at large in the course of these missionary journeys.

*(Commissioned by The Universal House of Justice, The Century of Light, p. 21)*

The seventh candle is unity of language, i.e., the choice of a universal tongue in which all peoples will be instructed and converse. Each and every one of these will inevitably come to pass, inasmuch as the power of the Kingdom of God will aid and assist in their realization.

*(Quoted in “The Century of Light”, p.128; Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, op. cit., pp. 34-36, (section 15))*

While it will be decades—or perhaps a great deal longer—before the vision contained in this remarkable document is fully realized, the essential features of what it promised are now established facts throughout the world. In several of the great changes envisioned—unity of race and unity of religion—the intent of the Master's words is clear and the processes involved are far advanced, however great may be the resistance in some quarters. To a large extent this is also true of unity of language. The need for it is now recognized on all sides, as reflected in the circumstances that have compelled the United Nations and much of the non-governmental community to adopt several “official languages”. Until a decision is taken by international agreement, the effect of such developments as the Internet, the management of air traffic, the development of technological vocabularies of various kinds, and universal education itself, has been to make it possible, to some extent, for English to fill the gap.

*(Commissioned by The Universal House of Justice, The Century of Light, p. 128)*

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