

Daniel's Prophecies

MEMORANDUM

To: The Universal House of Justice

Date: 13 December 1990, Revised February 1996

From: Research Department

From time to time, questions are raised by the Bahá'ís about the interpretation of the Biblical prophecies contained in the following verses in Daniel 12:11-12:

And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days.

Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days.

To assist the friends in their study of this subject, the Research Department has prepared a summary of the elucidations contained in the Writings of Abdu'l-Bahá and the letters written by or on behalf of Shoghi Effendi on this theme. Three main issues are addressed: the interpretation of 1,290 days; the interpretation of 1,335 days; and the date of the commencement of the "hundred lunar years," which, as mentioned by Shoghi Effendi in "God Passes By" (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1987), page 151, will precede the consummation of the 1,335 days.

1. 1,290 Days

In "Some Answered Questions" (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1984), pages 43-44, Abdu'l-Bahá interprets the prophecy concerning the 1,290 days in the following terms:

The beginning of this lunar reckoning is from the day of the proclamation of the prophethood of Muḥammad in the country of Hijaz; and that was three years after His mission, because in the beginning the prophethood of Muḥammad was kept secret, and no

one knew it save Khadijah and Ibn Nawfal. After three years it was announced. And Bahá'u'lláh, in the year 1290 from the proclamation of the mission of Muḥammad, caused His manifestation to be known.

Note that the Master indicates that, in this instance, time is measured by the "lunar" calendar. Since the proclamation of the mission of Muḥammad took place ten years prior to the Hegira, i.e., His flight from Mecca to Medina, from which date the Muslim calendar begins, the year 1290 from the proclamation of the mission of Muḥammad was the year 1280 of the Hegira, or 1863-64 A.D.

There are references to 1,290 days in "God Passes By," on pages 110 and 151. In these passages, Shoghi Effendi confirms that the Declaration of Bahá'u'lláh in Baghdad, which occurred in 1863 (1280 A.H.), represents the fulfilment of the 1,290 days.

2. 1,335 Days

Two Tablets revealed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá which are published in "The Passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá" (Haifa: 1922), by Lady Blomfield and Shoghi Effendi, provide interpretations of the 1,335 days referred to by Daniel:

Now concerning the verse in Daniel, the interpretation whereof thou didst ask, namely, "Blessed is he who cometh unto the thousand three hundred and thirty five days." These days must be reckoned as solar and not lunar years. For according to this calculation a century will have elapsed from the dawn of the Sun of Truth, then will the teachings of God be firmly established upon the earth, and the Divine Light shall flood the world from the East even unto the West. Then, on this day, will the faithful rejoice! (p. 31)

O servant of God! The afore mentioned a thousand three hundred and thirty-five years must be reckoned from the day of the flight of His Holiness Muḥammad, the Apostle of God, (Hegira) salutations and blessings rest upon Him, at the close of which time the signs of the rise, the glory, the exaltation, the spread of the

Word of God throughout the East and the West shall appear. (p. 31)

From these Tablets it appears that:

1. The spread of the Faith throughout the world will signal the fulfilment of this prophecy.
2. The “days must be reckoned as solar and not lunar years.”
3. The Tablets suggest that the prophecy is fulfilled by two different dates. The first derives from the centenary of the Declaration of Bahá'u'lláh; the second is calculated from 622 A.D. – hence, 1963 and 1957.

Shoghi Effendi associated Daniel's reference to the 1,335 days and Abdu'l-Bahá's statements about this prophecy with the centenary of the formal assumption of Bahá'u'lláh's prophetic office and the worldwide triumph of the Bahá'í Cause. He stressed that the prophecy refers to occurrences within the Bahá'í community, rather than to events in the outside world, e.g., the establishment of peace. While the Guardian clearly allied the triumph of the Faith with the successful termination of the third Teaching Plan undertaken by the believers, in his letters and those written on his behalf, three specific dates are mentioned as marking the fulfilment of Daniel's prophecy.

2.1 1960 – A lunar reckoning

Concerning the Declaration of Bahá'u'lláh in Baghdad, Shoghi Effendi, in “God Passes By,” page 151, wrote:

The “hundred lunar years,” destined to immediately precede that blissful consummation (1,335 days), announced by Daniel ... had commenced.

One hundred years, by a “lunar reckoning,” after the Declaration of Bahá'u'lláh coincides with 1960.

2.2 1963 – A solar reckoning

When the world-embracing Spiritual Crusade was announced in October 1952, Shoghi Effendi linked the

completion of this decade-long enterprise with the fulfilment of Daniel's prophecy:

LET THEM AS THEY ENTER IT VOW ONE VOICE
 ONE HEART ONE SOUL NEVER TURN BACK
 ENTIRE COURSE FATEFUL DECADE AHEAD UNTIL
 EACH EVERY ONE WILL HAVE CONTRIBUTED
 SHARE LAYING ON WORLD-WIDE SCALE AN
 UNASSAILABLE ADMINISTRATIVE FOUNDATION
 FOR BAHÁ'U'LLAH'S CHRIST-PROMISED
 KINGDOM ON EARTH SWELLING THEREBY
 CHORUS UNIVERSAL JUBILATION WHEREIN
 EARTH HEAVEN WILL JOIN AS PROPHESED
 DANIEL ECHOED 'ABDU'L-BAHA ON THAT DAY
 WILL FAITHFUL REJOICE WITH EXCEEDING
 GLADNESS. ("Messages to the Bahá'í World, 1950-1957"
 (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1971), p. 44)

Thereafter, the fulfilment of Daniel's prophecy concerning the 1,335 days is associated with the end of the Ten Year Crusade. For example, in a letter dated 9 February 1953 on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to a group of Bahá'ís, his secretary wrote:

The purpose of the Conferences¹ will be the world-wide propagation of the Faith. They will lay the foundations of the service of the Bahá'ís of the world for the great Ten Year Crusade ahead — which, God willing, will be consummated in the fulfilment of the prophecies of Daniel, and the achievement of the initial goals set by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in the Tablets of the Divine Plan, whereby the world will be flooded with the Glory of the Lord.

And, in a letter dated 11 May 1956 written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, we find the following statement:

...when we fulfil the Ten Year Crusade, we will have brought into fulfilment Daniel's great prophecy of "Blessed is he who waits and comes to the 1335 days."

¹ International Conferences scheduled to take place during 1953.

2.3 1957

There are several references in letters written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi which give 1957 as the date of the fulfilment of the prophecy. For example:

It is far too early to make any predictions about peace of any sort, judging by the ebullitions of the world's affairs these days! 'Abdu'l-Bahá, in His Tablets, connects the prophecy of Daniel — 1957 — with the proclamation and spread of the Cause. (31 July 1946 to an individual believer)

It is interesting to note that, when a National Spiritual Assembly sought clarification from the beloved Guardian about whether the 1,335 days culminate in 1957 or in 1963, Shoghi Effendi in a letter dated 30 June 1952 written on his behalf indicated:

Regarding the prophecy of Daniel ... this prophecy refers to the hundredth anniversary of the Declaration of Bahá'u'lláh in the Garden of Ridvan, Baghdad. Reference to this can be found in "The Passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá" in quotations from two of His Tablets. (30 June 1952)

2.4 The Calculation of the Date

A number of believers requested guidance from Shoghi Effendi about how to calculate the date that will coincide with the fulfilment of the 1,335 days. We provide two responses written on behalf of the Guardian:

The 1335 days referred to by Daniel will be fulfilled in 1963. The date of the Hijra is 622 A.D. The 1335 days is figured according to the solar calendar, but in adjusting the 1335 days, one must take into consideration the time at which the prophecies were given and change them into solar time, which would bring the date to 1963.

There is one thing of importance for the Bahá'ís to understand; and that is, that this prophecy refers to happenings within the Faith, not occurrences outside the Faith. It refers specifically to the spread of the Faith

over the face of the earth. This will be accomplished when the Bahá'í Faith is firmly established in all of the virgin areas outlined in the Ten Year Crusade, and the other goals of the Crusade are completed. Thus it behoves us to work day and night in order to accomplish this glorious goal. (18 December 1953 to an individual believer)

As regards your question concerning the date 1335: The reckoning of this date does not bring it to the exact date of 1963, but a few more years. Nevertheless, there is no conflict in this, because 'Abdu'l-Bahá says that it will be the beginning of the diffusion of the Light of the Faith in the east and the west. This will already have begun to come about before 1963, which is the fulfilment of the 100 years from Bahá'u'lláh's Declaration. (31 January 1955 to an individual believer)

It is noteworthy that insufficient information is provided in the first extract to permit a precise calculation, while in the second, the Guardian's secretary indicates that a calculation would not give "the exact date of 1963, but a few more years." The Research Department has not been able to locate any additional authoritative texts which contain detailed instructions concerning how to make the calculation.

3. The "Hundred Lunar Years"

In *God Passes By* page 151, Shoghi Effendi allies the "hundred lunar" "years after the Declaration of Bahá'u'lláh with the fulfilment of the 1,335 days of Daniel's prophecy. The only other reference to one hundred "lunar" years that the Research Department has, so far, been able to find, is contained in a letter dated 31 October 1947 written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to a National Spiritual Assembly. This letter clarifies the mistaken assumption that the year 1335 relates to the centenary of Bahá'u'lláh's mystic experience in the Siyah-Chal (i.e., 1952-1953):

He wishes me to point out that this is inaccurate as on page 151 of "God Passes By," in the references to His Declaration, the Guardian clearly states that with this

Declaration the “hundred lunar years” ... had commenced. The mystic experience of Bahá'u'lláh was in the Siyah-Chal and has nothing to do with Daniel's prophecy.

This statement of the Guardian is itself based on extracts from two of the Master's Tablets which are published in “The Passing of Abdu'l-Bahá.”

In addition, a believer asked Shoghi Effendi about the relationship between the establishment of peace and the fulfilment of the prophecy about the 1,335 days and requested the source of, a reference to, and the starting date of, a prophecy concerning the “one hundred years after the Declaration of Bahá'u'lláh” referred to in a pilgrim's notes. The Guardian in a letter dated 1 April 1946 written on his behalf made the following response:

‘Abdu'l-Bahá's interpretation of the prophecy of Daniel does not definitely connect it with either the Lesser or the Most Great Peace, but rather with a great step forward on the part of humanity and the Bahá'í Faith. All we know is that the Lesser and the Most Great Peace will come – their exact dates we do not know.

The 100 years is from 1853; the Master explains this in some of His Tablets, and is quoted in “The Passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.” Both of the letters cited above base their conclusions on the same two Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, which are quoted in section 2 of this memorandum. Since the beloved Guardian rules out a relationship between Daniel's prophecy and the intimation of the coming of revelation to Bahá'u'lláh, it is evident that some other explanation must be found for the significance of the one-hundred-year period that begins in 1853.

4. Concluding Remarks

While it is clear that the prophecy concerning the 1,335 days is associated with the spread of the Bahá'í Faith throughout the world, several different dates are given in our authoritative texts for the actual fulfilment of this prophecy. As mentioned earlier, the two Tablets of the Master which are cited in “The Passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá,” page 31, suggest different dates for the fulfilment of the prophecy of the 1,335 days: 1963 and 1957.

Further, in the letters written by or on behalf of Shoghi Effendi, the Guardian indicates that these same Tablets form the basis for his interpretation of the date of the fulfilment of the 1,335 days referred to in Daniel. Three different dates are either given by the Guardian or can be inferred from these same Tablets – 1957, 1960, and 1963.

In addition, these same Tablets are also given as the reference for the one-hundred-year period that began in 1853.

In light of the foregoing, it is, therefore, suggested that:

4. The prophecy of Daniel about the 1,335 days is not fulfilled by just one single date. Its fulfilment is, rather, a process that extends over a period of time.
5. The fulfilment of the prophecy coincides with the period of the Ten Year Crusade, 1953-1963, a span of time that includes 1953 (the end of the hundred years whose significance is unclear), 1957, 1960, and 1963.

It is interesting to note that Shoghi Effendi described the Ten Year Crusade as the “ninth part” of that “majestic process, set in motion at the dawn of the Adamic cycle” by means of which the “light” of God’s Revelation will be diffused in both the Eastern and Western Hemispheres, through the operation of a decade-long world spiritual crusade whose termination will, God willing, coincide with the Most Great Jubilee commemorating the Centenary of the Declaration of Bahá’u’lláh in Baghdad. (30 April 1953 to the All-America Intercontinental Teaching Conference, published in MBW p. 155)

Furthermore, the Guardian in a letter dated 7 March 1955 written on his behalf to an individual believer states:

Thus in the Ten Year Crusade, we are actually fulfilling the prophecy of Daniel, because with the completion of the Ten Year Crusade in 1963 we will have established the Faith in every part of the globe.

What a great privilege it is that individuals such as we are, have an opportunity to not only spread the Teachings of Bahá’u’lláh, but in this period of the Ten Year Crusade, are actually engaged in the fulfilment of prophecy.