

1 SHOGHI EFFENDI'S LETTERS TO ALAIN LOCKE

2 Persian Colony, Haifa
3 15-II-30 [*sic*]

4 Dear Dr. Locke:

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

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

19 What he sends you now is half of the book, the rest he will mail as it is translated.
20 The form that it is in at present is far from being the last one. Yet he wishes to have all
21 the possible suggestions before he puts it in its final form.

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

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

33 With deepest appreciation

34 Yours ever sincerely

35 Ruhi Afnan

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39 The second letter (5 July 1930) was sent to Locke to acknowledge his editorial
40 assistance:

41 Persian Colony
42 Haifa, Palestine
43 5-7-30

44 Dear Prof. Locke:

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

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

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

59 Yours ever sincerely

60 Ruhi Afnan.

61 [Postscript in the Guardian's own hand:]

62 My dear co-worker:

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

70 Your true brother,

71 Shoghi

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73 **Of Locke, Shoghi Effendi reportedly said that: "People as you, Mr Gregory, Dr**
74 **Esslemont and some other dear souls are as rare as diamond."**[279] (Bahadur to
75 Locke, 27 February 1924, Alain Locke Papers, MSRC, Box 164-12, Folder 2 (Bahadur, Azizullah).