

Bahá'í Archives¹

Preserving and safeguarding the Sacred Texts

"Guard thou the verses of thy Lord as thou wouldst guard thine own eyes. He, verily, is the Preserver, the Mighty."

Instructions of Bahá'u'lláh:

In His Writings Bahá'u'lláh has given guidance to the friends concerning the preservation of the Sacred Texts.

In some of His Tablets He clearly states that many of the Writings have fallen into the hands of enemies, and that the believers should do all in their power to prevent this.

"The people of God should do all that lieth within their power to protect and preserve the Tablets. In the Land of Tá whatever there was in the homes of the friends was taken and fell into the hands of the heedless. We have commanded all to safeguard that which hath proceeded from the Pen of the Most High."

He has instructed that the friends should designate a secure place within which to store the divine verses.

"The friends should designate a strong, secure place for storing the divine verses, so that they may not be exposed to the touch of unworthy hands..."

Bahá'u'lláh states that the original Tablets must be handled with the greatest care while being read, and then put away in some safe place.

"The treatment of the Tablets should be such that they remain preserved in their original immaculacy. When being read they should be placed within a second sheet, and thereafter deposited in some special place for safe keeping."

Bahá'í Archives at the World Centre

Bahá'u'lláh's instructions for the safe keeping of the Sacred Texts are followed at the Bahá'í World Centre, where they are stored in a special chamber with environmental control and fire protection systems. The Tablets are carefully packed into folders and boxes made from archival papers and boards.

The preservation programme at the Bahá'í World Centre includes environmental monitoring, and training in special document handling techniques for staff members who work with the Sacred Texts. Paper conservation treatments are performed on Tablets which suffered damage prior to being given to the Archives. These measures ensure that the Bahá'í Writings receive the highest possible standard of care.

The preservation of the Sacred Texts is referred to not only in the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh but also in the writings of the beloved Guardian and the Universal House of Justice.

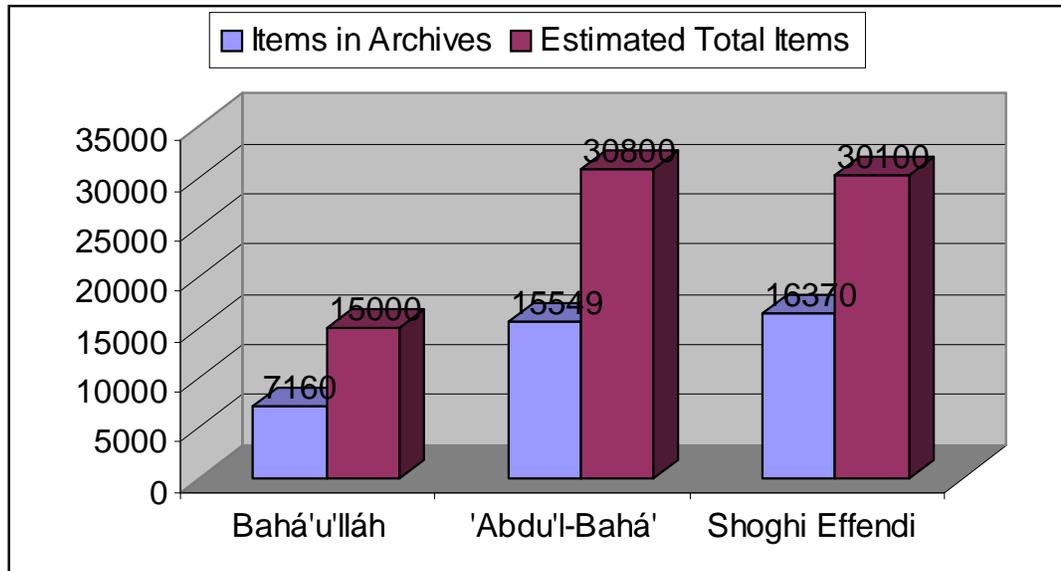
Shoghi Effendi established the International Bahá'í Archives in 1925 for the purpose of collecting the Sacred Texts and relics, items "whose dispersal would be a source of loss and detriment..."; and the Universal House of Justice has given prominence to the task of preserving the Sacred Texts by including it in its own Constitution.

Letters written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi explain that "The work of collecting the Tablets...is one of the most important tasks, for upon it depends our true understanding of the Cause and its principles," and that the collections of writings would be "of indispensable value and use to the Guardian and to all international bodies that may meet in Haifa whether in the distant or near future."

To assist the House of Justice in referring to the wealth of guidance and teachings contained in the Bahá'í Writings, a computer database is used which contains descriptions of every Tablet and every letter of Shoghi Effendi, together with a typed copy of the text of each document. In the near future images of the original documents will also be stored in the computer, making it unnecessary to refer to the original items.

Statistical information now made available by the computer database enables calculation of the estimated total numbers of Tablets and letters which were revealed or written.

The charts below compare the numbers of originals and photocopies of Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and letters of Shoghi Effendi which have been deposited in the Archives, with the total number estimated to have been written.



Some precious original documents have been lost through natural disasters, war, and other misfortunes. With them have been lost the words written by Bahá'u'lláh, 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the beloved Guardian.

If your family has in its possession original Tablets or letters you are warmly invited to contact the Archives Office at the Bahá'í World Centre for guidance on sending the original documents or copies of them to the International Bahá'í Archives.

Note:

1. This pamphlet was an insert in 'Andalib magazine, 12.48 (Fall 1993). It was published on the occasion of the 7th International Convention (1993) by the Archives Office at the Bahá'í World Centre, Haifa, Israel.

2. In an [article](#) (13 June 2002) on the publication of the volume 'The Summons of the Lord of Hosts' the Bahá'í World News Service states: '... during His 40-year ministry, ... [Bahá'u'lláh] revealed thousands of tablets which altogether represent a volume more than 70 times the size of the Qur'an and more than 15 times the size of the Old and New Testaments of the Bible.'