

BAHÁ'Í JOURNAL

Published by

NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE BAHÁ'ÍS OF THE BRITISH ISLES
BM/BAHAI, LONDON, W.C.1

No. 119

Bahá'í Year 111

DECEMBER, 1954

THE INSTITUTION OF THE HAZÍRATU'L-QUDS.

WORDS OF THE GUARDIAN

'Simultaneous(ly) . . . undertakings of great institutional significance were initiated by these newly-found Assemblies, among which the institution of the Hazíratu'l-Quds—the seat of the Bahá'í National Assembly and pivot of all Bahá'í administrative activity in future—must rank as one of the most important. Originating first in Persia, now universally known by its official and distinctive title signifying "The Sacred Fold", marking a notable advance in the evolution of the process whose beginnings may be traced to the clandestine gatherings held at times underground and in the dead of night, by the persecuted followers of the Faith in that country, this institution, still in the early stages of its development, has already lent its share to the consolidation of the internal functions of the organic Bahá'í community, and provided a further visible evidence of its steady growth and rising power.

'Complementary in its functions to those of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár—an edifice exclusively reserved for Bahá'í worship—this institution, whether local or national, will as its component parts, such as the Secretariat, the Treasury, the Archives, the Library, the Publishing Office, the Assembly Hall, the Council Chamber, the Pilgrims' Hostel, are brought together and made jointly to operate in one spot, be increasingly regarded as the focus of all Bahá'í administrative activity, and symbolise, in a befitting manner, the ideal of service animating the Bahá'í community in its relation alike to the Faith and to mankind in general.'

From *God Passes By*

'While the National Office in Wilmette, designated by the Guardian as Hazíratu'l-Quds, is primarily an administrative centre, its use should by no means be confined to purely administrative work, but should include such activities of a social and intellectual character, both local and national, as can best establish its character as the foremost teaching and administrative centre of the Faith throughout the States.

'In the conduct of any social activity at the National Office, however, great care should be taken to maintain strictly the dignity of the place, particularly in view of its proximity to the House of Worship, which makes it doubly essential for all the believers to conform to the standards of conduct

and of social intercourse set up in the Bahá'í Teachings.

'As a teaching centre, where Bahá'í lectures, conferences and meetings, whether local, regional or national, could be held, the Hazíratu'l-Quds can also prove of invaluable help, and the N.S.A. should indeed see to it that the necessary facilities are provided in the building for that purpose.

'By thus combining these three features, namely, teaching, administrative and social, the Hazíratu'l-Quds can best fulfil its mission as the visible symbol of the steadily-growing national Bahá'í Community in Northern America, and as the chief rallying centre for all its activities and plans throughout the continent.'

From a letter to the American National Assembly written in 1940 through his Secretary.

THE FIRST BRITISH HAZÍRATU'L-QUDS.

27 Rutland Gate, London, S.W.7

The Guardian considered acquisition of a national Hazíratu'l-Quds in London so important that he described it as 'the chief objective and pre-eminent duty of this Community's elected national representatives'. He said it was 'bound to exert, *in the days immediately ahead*, a far-reaching and pervasive influence on the growth and unfoldment of the Faith'. These are weighty statements, which we should all try more fully to understand. The Hazíratu'l-Quds is ours. Its acquisition is releasing spiritual forces promoting the growth of Faith. We must try to become adequate channels for the action of these spiritual forces, so that they may take their fullest effect and lead in the British Isles to the 'rapid increase in the number of the avowed supporters of the Faith' and the 'multiplication of isolated centres, groups and assemblies' for which the Guardian pleads.

These forces will best act if we have a proper understanding of attitude to the Hazíratu'l-Quds, whose acquisition is releasing them. Its name, meaning 'The Sacred Fold', indicates the station and purpose of the building. Throughout the Bahá'í world the institution is still embryonic only, so that our National Hazíratu'l-Quds must be looked upon as the forerunner of an institution which will occupy many buildings and constitute part of the nerve centre of the British Isles.

Through its spiritual forces latent in the Administrative Order of the Bahá'u'lláh will find expression. It is one of the symbols of the coming of the Kingdom of God on earth, a centre for manifesting Divine Unity from which the fragrances of God will be diffused. It is not just a national office, still less merely a local Bahá'í Centre for the London friends; it is the Sacred Fold of God dedicated to the service of the Covenant and of our beloved Guardian. In it are found in token form all but one of the component parts mentioned by the Guardian in the passage from *God Passes By* quoted in this issue.

The Secretariat and the Publishing Office occupy two rooms and some storage space. One room and more storage space is devoted to the Archives. The Library is a room used also for social purposes (anyone wishing to study will usually be able to find quietude elsewhere in the building). The Assembly Hall is a large room, at present rented from the National Assembly by the London Assembly for use as the London Bahá'í Centre. The Council Chamber is the National Assembly meeting room; the Pilgrims' Hostel, a bedroom for visitors; only the Treasury has at present no accommodation in the Hazíratu'l-Quds, since the time has not yet come for this development.

Other accommodation includes a committee room which may be made part of the Assembly Hall for large meetings by opening double doors. If the National Assembly room and the committee room are both in use, a third committee may meet in a back room which serves also for preparation of tea and an office for the London Assembly. The 'activities of a social and intellectual character' to which the Guardian refers will take place in whichever room is best suited to the occasion.

The top floors make a maisonette for the Secretary and his family; and a housekeeper, who keeps the building clean, lives in part of the basement. From the start the Assembly considered this arrangement necessary for the proper running of the Secretariat and of the Hazíratu'l-Quds; but even if they had not it would have been found essential as the search progressed. Without provision of such residential accommodation, there would have been no chance of obtaining a permit from the London County Council to use either this or any other building in a residential area for our purposes. The arrangement greatly assists maintenance of the Hazíratu'l-Quds, since rent from the London Centre and reduction in the Secretary's salary in return for accommodation goes far towards meeting otherwise heavy maintenance costs.

The Hazíratu'l-Quds is a national institution, national in its function, its influence and its management. Nevertheless, the London friends will obtain special benefit from it. They will have a far better Bahá'í Centre than they could rent for the same money elsewhere and will be able also to use other rooms, such as the library, as occasion demands. Their activities will be conducted in the shadow of the spiritual power of the National Hazíratu'l-Quds, of which the London Bahá'í Community should be the first to feel the benefit.

Those in the provinces will like to know that Rutland Gate is in a very good residential neighbourhood in the Knightsbridge area, near Hyde Park. The address

is worthy of the standing of the Faith and will provide evidence of it to anyone with knowledge of London in places where there are few Bahá'ís. It is hoped that all Bahá'ís visiting London will spend some time at the Hazíratu'l-Quds, and attend the meetings there. Those unable to come themselves may have friends who would like to attend the meetings.

In his letter to the American National Assembly, written in 1940 and quoted in this issue, the Guardian indicates how a Hazíratu'l-Quds may be used for local, regional and national activities that are not primarily administrative, as well as for the administrative purposes for which it exists. By combining teaching, administrative and social features, he says, it can 'best fulfil its mission as the visible symbol of the steadily-growing National Bahá'í Community' and 'as the chief rallying centre for all its activities and plans'. The assistance of all, inside and outside London, is needed to achieve this goal. Then we will surely witness the 'far-reaching and pervasive influence on the growth and the unfoldment of the Faith' which the Guardian promises.

He proclaimed the purchase of the building as a 'historic victory'. Let us ensure that the fruits of victory are gathered in a befitting manner by a proper use of the Hazíratu'l-Quds so laboriously acquired.

NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY

Since the above was written, a letter has been received from Mr. Leroy Ioas containing the following passage: 'I am very happy indeed to learn that the purchase of the National Office is to be consummated soon, and that you will be moving into it toward the end of December. This will mark a new stage in the development of the British Bahá'í Community, and should be the means of intensifying the consolidation work, as well as the public teaching work.'

FOR MEDITATION

Behold how contrary are the ways of the Manifestations of God, as ordained by the King of creation, to the ways and desires of men! As thou comest to comprehend the essence of these divine mysteries, thou wilt grasp the purpose of God, the divine Charmer, the Best-Beloved. Thou wilt regard the words and the deeds of that almighty Sovereign as one and the same; in such wise that whatsoever thou dost behold in His deeds, the same wilt thou find in His sayings, and whatsoever thou dost read in His sayings, that wilt thou recognise in His deeds.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

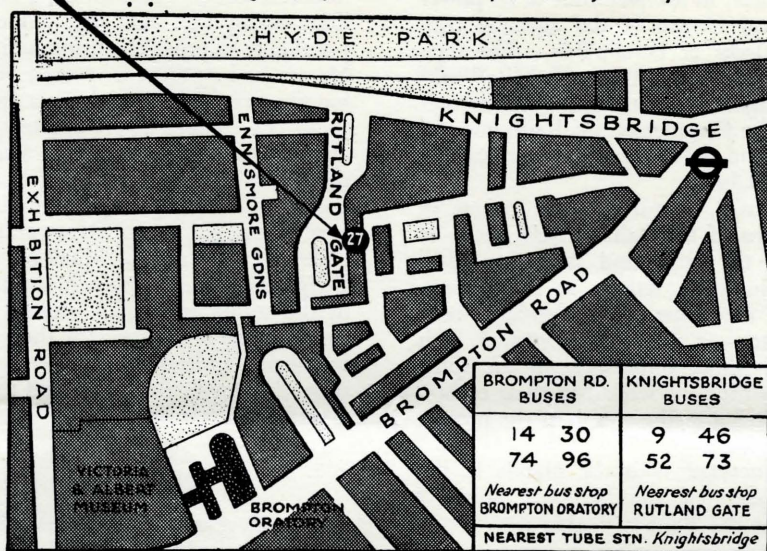
Bahá'í Publishing Trust Terms

New terms came into operation on 1st October, 1954. The Trust now gives 10 per cent. discount on all orders of £3 or more. Local Assemblies in the British Isles are not charged postage on orders of over £3.

Change of Address

From 22nd December, the address of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the British Isles will be 27 Rutland Gate, London, S.W.7 (Tel. Knightsbridge 2566). This will also be the London address of the Bahá'í Publishing Trust.

Hazíratu'l-Quds, 27 Rutland Gate, London, S.W.7



Those coming by bus to Brompton Oratory should take the footpath by the side of the Oratory. Approaching by this route, there is a mews turning between Ennismore Gardens and Rutland Gate

FROM THE GUARDIAN
Evolution of the World Centre

The message from the Guardian to the Bahá'í world through the United States National Assembly, given below, was dated 27th November, 1954.

'I hail, with feelings of thankfulness and relief, the signature, on the eve of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's ascension, of a contract for the immediate expropriation, by the Israeli Finance Minister, on the recommendation of the Mayor of the City of Haifa, of a thirteen-hundred metre plot, owned by the sister of Fareed, notorious enemy of the Centre of Bahá'u'lláh's Covenant. This historic act paves the way for the early transfer of the title deed of this plot by the State of Israel to the Bahá'í Community, now engaged in establishing and consolidating its World Administrative Centre in the Holy Land.

The truculence, greed and obstinacy of this breaker of the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh, demonstrated by her persistent refusal to sell and by the exorbitant price subsequently demanded, raised, during more than thirty years, an almost insurmountable obstacle to the acquisition of an area which, however circumscribed, occupies a central position amidst the extensive Bahá'í domains in the heart of God's holy Mountain, is situated in the vicinity of the Báb's Sepulchre, overlooks the Tomb of the Greatest Holy Leaf, and adjoins the resting-places of the Brother and the Mother of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and which, through deliberate neglect, has been allowed to become an eyesore to all those who through the embellished precincts of a Mausoleum rightly regarded as the second holiest Shrine in the Bahá'í world.

The ownership of this plot will now enable us to locate the site, excavate the foundations, and erect the structure of the International Bahá'í Archives, designed

by the Hand of the Cause, Mason Remey, President of the International Bahá'í Council, which will serve as the permanent and befitting repository for the priceless and numerous relics associated with the Twin Founders of the Faith, with the Perfect Exemplar of its teachings and with its heroes, saints and martyrs, and the building of which constitutes one of the foremost objectives of the Ten Year Plan.

The raising of this Edifice will in turn herald the construction, in the course of successive epochs of the Formative Age of the Faith, of several other structures, which will serve as the administrative seats of such divinely appointed institutions as the Guardianship, the Hands of the Cause, and the Universal House of Justice. These Edifices will, in the shape of a far-flung arc, and following a harmonising style of architecture, surround the resting-places of the Greatest Holy Leaf, ranking as foremost among the members of her sex in the Bahá'í Dispensation, of her Brother, offered up as a ransom by Bahá'u'lláh for the quickening of the world and its unification, and of their Mother, proclaimed by Him to be His chosen "consort in all the world of God". The ultimate completion of this stupendous undertaking will mark the culmination of the development of a world-wide divinely-appointed Administrative Order whose beginnings may be traced as far back as the concluding years of the Heroic Age of the Faith.

This vast and irresistible process, unexampled in the spiritual history of mankind, and which will synchronise with two no less significant developments—the establishment of the Lesser Peace and the evolution of Bahá'í national and local institution—the one outside and the other within the Bahá'í world—will attain its final consummation, in the Golden Age of the Faith, through the raising of the standard of the Most Great

Peace, and the emergence, in the plenitude of its power and glory, of the focal Centre of the agencies constituting the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh. The final establishment of this seat of the future Bahá'í World Commonwealth will signalise at once the proclamation of the sovereignty of the Founder of our Faith and the advent of the Kingdom of the Father repeatedly lauded and promised by Jesus Christ.

This World Order will, in turn, in the course of successive Dispensations of the Bahá'í Cycle, yield its fairest fruit through the birth and flowering of a civilisation, divinely inspired, unique in its features, world-embracing in its scope, and fundamentally spiritual in its character—a civilisation destined, as it unfolds, to derive its initial impulse from the spirit animating the very institutions which, in their embryonic state, are now stirring in the womb of the present Formative Age of the Faith.

Advise share this message with the Hands of the Cause and the members of the National Spiritual Assemblies throughout the Bahá'í World.'

NEWS FROM AFRICA

Rosemary and Emeric Sala, Canadian pioneers in Zululand, write:

'Yesterday Emeric phoned the agent to conclude the negotiations for our lease of a government trading store in a reserve seventeen miles from Eshowe . . .

'We have visited over thirty stores in a radius of several hundred miles and from sea level to five thousand feet, and we are content that this is the one for us. There is the store, house (with plumbing!) and native quarters set on twenty-five acres of land. The buildings stand on a bluff overlooking a lovely valley, with a triple ring of hills around and before us, with a glimpse of the sea thirty miles away. There are banana trees, lemon, orange and papaya, as well as pineapples growing on a sunny slope. We had made offers on other trading stations with so much less, costing even more to lease, but Bahá'u'lláh's "No", though a disappointment for a moment or two at the time, has now proved to be a blessing, and we are very grateful . . . The Afrikaans manager and his wife will stay with us for three months until our Zulu improves and our knowledge of storekeeping for the natives is more than our present complete ignorance! Twenty-five cows, about, are included in the lease. We know nothing about keeping them, but fortunately a capable herdsboy is already engaged for the munificent sum of thirty shillings a month, board and lodgings not included.'

Benedict Eballa, pioneer from British Cameroons to Ashanti, which is under Persian jurisdiction, has been teaching in Kumasi, and already there are several new believers. He writes of one of the exciting events of his pioneering:

'On the 27th October I was given the opportunity by the proprietor of the City High School to give a speech on the Faith as he had previously been aware of it.

'Indeed it was really marvellous, and a very good privilege for me to speak to a whole school of two

hundred students and tutors, a thing I have not once done in my life. On that day of the 27th October I was able to prove the inspiration which our beloved Master had promised. Could you believe me that, for my first time of making a speech, I was able to speak 1½ hours approximately, and was able to answer marvellous questions which sprang from all the angles of the hall. Indeed I praise my endeavour, though it is not right for me to do so. They were all very impressed when I forwarded the Bahá'í principles of the Unity of Mankind and the Oneness of Religion. After the speech, the proprietor and seven of the tutors and a few students in the top classes came to me and expressed their desire of becoming members. Indeed it was a very glorious day. I gave them the few books I had, and they are now making a very good research.'

EUROPEAN NEWS

The pioneer to the Faroe Islands, Eskil Ljungberg, has now returned to the island after his stay in Copenhagen, where he went for medical treatment. His first letter after his return tells of his welcome by his friends:

'I am happily back at my post; I arrived last night after a terrible voyage, storm, rain and sea-sickness, of which most of the passengers suffered. We should have landed on this shore at 8 o'clock yesterday morning. The boat came in at half-past nine last night, sixteen hours late. But still, I am here, and very happy to be back again. My contacts met me, and I could feel how happy they both were to see me back again. Their faces were all aglow. I was afterwards invited to a royal dinner with them, and when I left I felt the greatest sympathy and sincerity from both of them. One of them walked with me home, and told me he had been working for the Cause in his way.

This morning, when I went out to buy some food, of which the house was empty; in all the shops I met with outstretched hands of welcome, and some of them shook my hand so that I thought they never were going to let me loose again. Things have altered.

I will now gather together those that are going to study in my class. Another thing, the people have asked my contact when I shall begin to have some public lectures; a good sign, people begin to want to know.'

Brigitte Hasselblatt, the pioneer in the Shetlands, writes:

'So many extraordinary things happen here that I am no longer surprised at anything. This is a very unique place, and maybe the Faith will be accepted quite suddenly, not, as is often the case, through long study and association with the pioneer. I wonder if it is possible to let me know of any special days and times when Bahá'ís meet and pray for us, because I can feel it very strongly here and try and arrange to see some contact during that time, because invariably they start to talk about the teachings, and it gives me a lot of spiritual strength.'

EUROPEAN TEACHING COMMITTEE