

BAHÁ'Í JOURNAL

Published by

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

No. 105

Bahá'í Year 110

APRIL 1953

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF HOLY YEAR

ABRIDGED NOTES OF ADDRESS GIVEN BY
MR. G. TOWNSHEND AT CONVENTION, 109

A Great Prophet from the beginning of His existence on earth is an Eternal Being, Divine. He holds for all time undisputed sovereignty over all that is in heaven and on earth. He shows from His early childhood signs of greatness and power. His Call makes no spiritual change. The change is physical like that of a man who passes from sleep to wakefulness, from silence to speech. He remains the same individual. He is at the moment of His Call invested with supreme authority and executive power. He is in a new relation to God; whereas at His Declaration he assumes a new relation to man. It is wonderful to reflect what really happens when a Great Prophet takes over from His Predecessor the lordship of mankind and initiates by His Call a new Era. The sovereignty of a Prophet, through the potency of one Word, subdues, quickens and revitalises the whole world. Bahá'u'lláh in his book, *Prayers and Meditations*, has given us the fullest picture of the extent of the influence of the Prophet's Word, which revolutionises the whole of creation. He says of His own utterance of this Word that through It 'the realities of all created things were shaken, were divided, separated, scattered, combined and reunited, disclosing in both the contingent world and the heavenly Kingdom entities of a new creation.'

Bahá'u'lláh did not make His public Declaration for ten years after His Call. The Báb received His Call about a year before He made His declaration to Mullá Husayn. Jesus Christ was called when John baptised Him, but the first open declaration He ever made of His Messiahship was the evening before His death when he announced to Caiaphas, the High Priest, that he would see the Son of Man coming with great power and glory. This is proved by the fact that Jesus' enemies sought but could not find anyone to give evidence that He had declared Himself to be the Messiah. Jesus accepted Peter's declaration of belief but never till His trial before the Sanhedrin made a declaration Himself. His full authority, however, dated from His Call. Bahá'u'lláh became active soon after His Call; but still as a Bábí we have read how He revived the Bábí community, not only in Baghdad, but through the furthestmost confines of Persia, and wrote (still appearing outwardly as a Bábí) the *Seven Valleys*, the *Hidden Words* and the *Book of Certitude*. He had the fullness of His power but did not manifest it.

If you look at the scriptures of the world you will find they all agree in many things and specially in this, that the history of mankind is one whole and that it can be rightly understood only in its unity. All these scriptures—those of Krishna, Buddha, Zoroaster, Moses and the rest—show that all the peoples of the world all the time have been engaged, however unconsciously, in a single great process moving towards unification. They have all been told to look to the future with expectancy and hope. This unification and redemption will be effected under the leadership of a supreme world Saviour, 'the Lord of Hosts' as the Bible calls Him, Who through His zeal will accomplish this great consummation. What has happened now through the centenary which we are commemorating is that now in this age, the age into which we have been born, this great Event has, after hundreds and thousands of years of waiting and preparation, come to pass. This age is that to which reference is made at the beginning of the Book of Genesis when, in the allegory of the fall of man, God gives the promise of a future world redemption, foretelling that man will wound the tempter's head and the tempter will bruise man's heel. When God announced to Abraham 'through thee will all the families of the earth be blessed,' His thoughts were of this present age, the time of the Call of Bahá'u'lláh. When Isaiah spoke of the Child which would be born on whose shoulder the government of the world would rest; when he speaks of 'mighty God,' 'the everlasting Father,' the 'Prince of Peace' that is to come, he is thinking of this present time, of the Lord of Hosts, Bahá'u'lláh, Whose centenary we humbly keep in this Holy Year.

BAHA'I PUBLISHING TRUST

'Some Christian Subjects'

This is a reprint of Part II of *Some Answered Questions*, with an introduction by George Townshend. Christian doctrines regarding the Trinity, Holy Communion, the Resurrection, Baptism, Original Sin, the Virgin Birth, Miracles and other matters are assessed by the Master in the light shed by Bahá'u'lláh. This book is valuable both for study by Bahá'ís and for interested enquirers who wish to know the Bahá'í view of such beliefs.

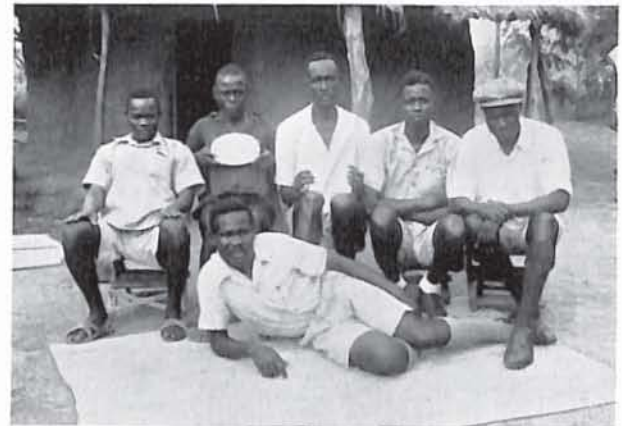
Paper 2/6



**FIRST
LOCAL
SPIRITUAL
ASSEMBLY
of
KAMPALA
UGANDA**



Bahá'ís in front of temporary Centre, Kobiom



District Teaching Committee, Teso, Uganda

AFRICA LETTERS

The following is a copy of a letter received by the Kampala Spiritual Assembly from the Guardian, dated September 19th, 1952.

Dear Bahá'í friends,

Your letter of June 24 has reached our beloved Guardian, as well as the postscript of Mr. Philip Hainsworth, and he has instructed me to answer you on his behalf.

He is delighted over the progress being made there, and was very relieved to hear, from the Africa Committee, that the Conference plans can now go ahead smoothly. Also the reports of the work being done in outlying districts (which dear Mrs. Banani has sent to

Lotfullah, and which he shares with the Guardian) have caused much joy.

It is wonderful to see that the African friends, having, as is their right and privilege, taken the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh to their hearts on their own, are arising to carry it to their fellow-countrymen, and are meeting with such notable success. How clearly we see that when prejudice and suspicion give way to love and confidence, the Power of God flows through and brings unexpected confirmation!

He was very pleased to see you have initiated a plan of your own, but feels that any plans for translation should be worked out in close consultation with the Africa Committee. This does not mean he is averse to new translations.

Wonderful work lies ahead of your Assembly, and you may be sure he follows your activities with close interest and supports them with his loving prayers.

With warm Bahá'í love,

R. RABBANI

(In the Guardian's own handwriting):

May the Beloved whose Cause you are promoting with exemplary valour, reward you abundantly for your splendid achievements, remove every obstacle from your path, and enable you to ennoble continually the record of your unforgettable services.

Your true and grateful brother,

SHOGHI



Thomas Breakwell, the first English Bahá'í

FOR MEDITATION

O God, My God! Shield Thy trusted servants from the evils of self and passion, protect them with the watchful eye of Thy loving kindness from all rancour, hate and envy, shelter them in the impregnable stronghold of Thy cause and, safe from the darts of doubtfulness, make them the manifestations of Thy glorious Signs, illumine their faces with the effulgent rays shed from the Dayspring of Thy Divine Unity, gladden their hearts with the verses revealed from Thy Holy Kingdom, strengthen their loins by Thy all-swaying power that cometh from Thy Realm of Glory. Thou art the All-Bountiful, the Protector, the All-Mighty, the Gracious.

SOME ANSWERS BY GEORGE TOWNSHEND

(Concluding Series)

Question: What are the characteristics of the New Era according to the Bible?

Answer:

- (a) *Justice, government and law for all nations:*
II Samuel vii, 12-16; I Chronicles xvi, 33; Psalms xxii, 28; I, 6; lxxii, 1-19; lxxxii, 8; lxxxv, 10; Isaiah ii, 2-4; ix, 6-7; xxxii, 103; xliii, 9; Jeremiah xxxi, 33; xxxiii, 15; Obadiah xxi.
- (b) *Peace*
Isaiah xi, 6-9; lxv, 17-25; Ezekiel xxxiv, 25; Hosea ii, 18; Haggai ii, 9; Zechariah xiv, 11.
- (c) *World Unity*
Daniel ii, 44; Micah iv, 2-3.
- (d) *World Brotherhood*
Zechariah iii, 10.
- (e) *One Faith*
Isaiah lii, 6; lvi, 7; lxvi, 23; Zechariah xiv, 9.
- (f) *Spiritual Quickening*
Ezekiel xi, 19; Joel ii, 28-29.
- (g) *Universal Language*
Zephaniah iii, 9; Zechariah xiv, 9.
- (h) *One name for faithful*
Isaiah lxii, 2.
- (i) *Democracy*
Jeremiah xxx, 21.
- (j) *Science*
Daniel xii, 4; Nahum ii, 3-4; Habakkuk ii, 14.
- (k) *Health*
Isaiah lxv, 19-20; Malachi, iv, 2.
- (l) *Security, Plenty*
Isaiah iv, 2; xxx, 23; lxv, 21-23; Ezekiel xxxiv, 23-31; Joel iii, 18.
- (m) *Teachers Visible*
Isaiah xxx, 20.
- (n) *Eyes and Ears*
Isaiah xxix, 15; xxxv, 5.
- (o) *Passing of Idols*
Isaiah xxxi, 7; Zechariah xiii, 2.

Question: Since false prophets, false Christs, and the Antichrist are to appear before the coming of the Second Advent, who were these?

Answer: 'False Christs and false prophets' refers both to those who, as open opponents, preach atheism, agnosticism, materialism and the like, repudiating Christ's Revelation; or more especially to those who misinterpret and misrepresent Christ's meaning, and though themselves within the Christian fold are as tares among the wheat, as wolves in sheep's clothing, creating disruption, schisms and factions. Both these classes have been numerous in recent times. The spirit of sectarianism is predominantly a false Christ.

Antichrist (I John ii, 22; II John, 5-7) is not any particular personage in history but a spirit of opposition and of rivalry towards Christ. St. John applied it to teachers who had gone out of the Church. 'Abdu'l-Bahá applied it to a Christian nation which was waging an aggressive war. (*Promulgation of Universal Peace*, page 4.)

BAHA'I WORLD

ALASKA. Anchorage has reported a public meeting at which members of the White, Negro, Oriental and Eskimo races were present.

AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND. In order to achieve their self-set goals of their Five Year Plan, there remained forty-eight places to fill, according to a report in the January issue of their Bulletin.

The New Zealand *Women's Weekly* last summer contained a feature article on the Faith entitled 'Who and what are the Bahá'ís?'

CANADA. As at January 31st and with less than twelve weeks of their Plan to go, there were still twenty-eight places to be filled in the goal cities and former Assemblies, but three of the goal cities and one former Assembly are 'over the line.'

COSTA RICA. The first Central American Bahá'í School was held at Karbila during four days at the end of September.

HAITI. Mr Guillermo Aquilar, a Bahá'í from Lima, in Peru, has been directing, on behalf of the United Nations, the establishment of a technological school for Haiti.

JAMAICA. The Regional Teaching Committee in Jamaica advertised daily for two weeks in the leading Jamaican newspaper as follows: 'Sick? Unemployed? Indebted? Persecuted? Disappointed? What else? There is a Bahá'í Prayer for your every need. General enquiries on the Faith are invited.' Thirty-four letters were received and enquirers were supplied with prayers, pamphlets and an informative letter about the Faith.

JAPAN. Miss Agnes Alexander had an opportunity to speak of the Bahá'í plan for world order, at the first Asian Congress for World Federation held at Hiroshima, among representatives from fourteen countries.

PANAMA. The Local Community were able to secure the services of Dr. Rafael Fusoni, Director of the Information Centre of the United Nations in Central America, at two public meetings, one at Balboa Y.M.C.A. and the other at the University of Panama, which they sponsored.

Additions to the Community

Since the last list appeared in *Bahá'í Journal*, registration cards have been received from the following:

Violet Sharp, Bradford
Ida Kouchekezadeh (Youth), Bristol
Robert Long, Nottingham
Annie Batstra, Norwich
Elsie Stubbs, Blackpool
Ivy Barnden, Brighton
Gwendoline Venus, Brighton
Gertrude Scott, Nottingham
Geraldine Craney, Nottingham
Sureyya Doktoroglu (from Turkey), Bristol
Fuad Abbas (Youth from Iraq), London
Alfred Brereton, Liverpool
Catherine Brereton, Liverpool

An all-day inter-community meeting in September concluded with a broadcast, on Radio Atlantico, consisting of Bahá'í readings on 'The Unity of Humanity.'

The Ministry of Education has given permission for the Panama Community to give free classes in English and Spanish for the purpose of furthering culture and providing an indirect form of attraction to the Bahá'í teachings.

PHILIPPINES. The United Nations Conference for Non-Governmental Organisations, held in Manila in October, was attended by four Bahá'í delegates. The Bahá'ís were the only delegates to receive a special press interview on the Faith alone. They also gave two radio broadcasts and spoke at several luncheons.

SAN SALVADOR. At a United Nations Seminar two delegate representatives were Bahá'ís who were able to demonstrate their excellent training in consultation in their work on committees.

SARAWAK. As at Naw Ruz a Chinese couple and an Indian had accepted the Faith, they are working hard to find the other four to create the Assembly at Ridvan.

SOUTH AMERICA. Two international schools were held in February at Loncoche in Chile and at Ezeiza in Argentina. Enthusiastic reports of the study in institutes of the 'Drama of Salvation' were given by seventeen communities. Argentina, Peru, Paraguay, Bolivia, Brazil, Uruguay, Venezuela and Colombia.

SWITZERLAND. The Fourth All-Swiss Conference was held in Basel in November and attracted between forty and fifty people.

U.S.A. A Bahá'í employed by the California School for the Deaf has had one of the Bahá'í prayers translated into sign language.

The Bahá'í Message was publically portrayed in a display booth set up at the annual Mississippi State Fair.

The Education Authority has given permission to the San Francisco Assembly for children of Bahá'í parents to be excused attendance at school on Bahá'í Holy Days.

Addresses

National Secretary: John Ferraby, 49 Sandbourne Avenue, London, S.W.19.

National Treasurer: Dr. John Mitchell, Dawnedge Thatch, Aspley Guise, Bletchley, Bucks.

Editor, 'Bahá'í Journal': Joe Jameson, 21 Beech Grove, Wallsend, Northumberland.

Treasurer, Shrine and International Funds: Arthur Norton, 41 Cranbourne Road, Chellow Dene, Bradford.

Book Orders: Reg. Coulson, Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 39 High Street, Manchester 4.