

# BAHÁ'Í JOURNAL

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## PIONEERING

*'O Son of Being! Make mention of Me on My earth, that in My Heaven I may remember thee, thus shall Mine eyes and thine be solaced.'*—Bahá'u'lláh.

Christ told His disciples: 'Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature.'<sup>1</sup> In more forceful ways and with constant reiteration, Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá have enjoined the Bahá'ís to teach the Faith to all mankind. Naturally, such a tremendously joyful tiding to which the Tablet of Carmel refers as 'the City of God that hath descended from heaven' must be announced to every corner of the earth. The Báb, we may recall, told Mulla Husayn: 'My Covenant with you is now accomplished. Gird up the loins of endeavour, and arise to diffuse my Cause. Be not dismayed at the sight of the degeneracy and perversity of this generation, for the Lord of the Covenant shall assuredly assist you . . . Even as the cloud that rains its bounty upon the earth, traverse the land from end to end, and shower upon its people the blessings which the Almighty, in His mercy, has deigned to confer upon you . . . Raise the cry: 'Awake, Awake, for lo! the Gate of God is open, and the morning light is shedding its radiance upon all mankind! The Promised One is made manifest, prepare the way for Him, O people of the earth! Deprive not yourselves of its redeeming grace, nor close your eyes to its effulgent glory . . .'<sup>2</sup> Indeed, the Báb Himself went on a pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina, the twin Holy Cities of Islám in Arabia, to carry His Cause into the very stronghold and cradle of Islám. He not only publicly announced His Revelation to one of the great theologians of his day, Mirza Muhi-i-Kirmani, but He 'addressed an epistle to the Sherif of that Holy City, wherein He set forth, in clear and unmistakable terms, the distinguishing features of His mission, and called upon him to arise and embrace His Cause.'<sup>3</sup> The voyage itself was 'long and arduous.' 'He embarked on a sailing vessel, which after two months of slow, and unsteady sailing, landed Him upon the shores of that sacred land.'<sup>4</sup> 'For days', the Báb wrote in the Persian Bayán, 'we suffered from the scarcity of water. I had to content myself with the juice of the sweet lemon.'<sup>5</sup>

'Abdu'l-Bahá, as the Exemplar of the Bahá'í Faith, set for all of us a perfect example of pioneering. At the age of sixty-seven, and after more than forty years of imprisonment, He visited Europe and England and

toured the United States, travelling thousands of miles and teaching the Cause day and night for nearly three years. When, on the 15th February, 1913, He sent a Persian believer from Paris to Switzerland to teach the Faith, 'Abdu'l-Bahá said: 'To-day, the most important duty is that of teaching the Cause . . . The good pleasure of the Blessed Beauty lies in that . . . To-day, no deed is worth doing except teaching the Cause of God. That is why I have laid aside everything and am engaged in teaching the Cause.' Two months later, when in Germany, some of the friends, on one occasion, begged that 'Abdu'l-Bahá take some rest for a few days. 'Abdu'l-Bahá said: 'Our purpose is not . . . rest and enjoyment. It is service to the Divine Threshold and the spreading of the fragrances of God. Our rest and enjoyment lie in servitude to the Threshold of Bahá'u'lláh.' On another occasion, when He was returning from Stuttgart to Paris, He refused the repeated requests of some of the friends to rest for a day at Baden-Baden. 'We are not of those who go sight-seeing' was 'Abdu'l-Bahá's answer, 'We want to work and to serve.'

Numerous quotations can be cited from the writings of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá and from the letters and cables of our Beloved Guardian, showing the necessity and urgency of pioneering for the Faith. What is important to-day is not simply to read those words but to act upon them resolutely and speedily. But to act like that depends on the extent of the Faith's penetration into our hearts and souls. We should always recall the words of our Beloved Guardian to an American believer: 'There are two kinds of Bahá'ís, one might say: those whose religion is Bahá'í and those who live for the Faith. Needless to say if we can belong to the latter category, if we can be in the vanguard of heroes, martyrs and saints, it is more praiseworthy in the sight of God.' How to be Bahá'ís of the second category is what we have to strive to achieve. It seems to me that there is a great difference between an intellectual conviction and a spiritual conversion. In the former case, we admit the truth of the Faith and accept it on purely logical and factual lines; in the latter, we experience deep in our soul the beauty and potency of that Truth. In the former case, our mind submits to

<sup>1</sup> St. Mark, xvi, 15.

<sup>2</sup> *The Dawnbreakers*, p. 85.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, p. 134.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, p. 129.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*, p. 131.



the Faith, in the latter our life is completely transformed by it. In the former case our Faith is simply an *addition* to our life, in the latter it is our life itself. We may admit and accept the truth that a molecule of water is composed of two atoms of hydrogen and one atom of oxygen, but we will never know how refreshing and life-giving water is until we get thirsty and *drink* it.

To be in the vanguard of heroes, martyrs and saints! Could there be any greater honour than that or any greater goal to achieve? Can we get to-day a vision of 'those holy men, those pioneers and martyrs of the Faith, who have fallen gloriously on the field of battle, and who with their life-blood, have sealed the triumph of the Cause of God'? The early pioneers were resigned to the Will of their Beloved and prepared to shed their blood in His Cause. Illustrations are too numerous to be related here. Let us recall the case of Mulla Ali Bastami, who has earned the 'immortal distinction' of having been the first believer to suffer for the Cause of the Báb and to lay down his life for Him. Severe trials and afflictions befell him when, in obedience to the command of his Master, he left Shiraz and proceeded to Karbala and Najaf in southern Iraq, to proclaim the call of the New Message. When a few miles outside Shiraz, he was beaten almost to death. 'To the strokes that fell heavily upon him, he, with extraordinary serenity returned this answer: . . . "I mind not the tortures you inflict upon me, for I stand prepared for the most grievous afflictions in the path I have chosen to follow . . ."'<sup>6</sup>

When the love of the Faith grips a person, heart and soul, he acquires such power, courage and detachment that the material conditions of life cease to have much meaning for him. The whole universe then becomes as Mulla Husayn said, 'a handful of dust' in his grasp. To such a person, serving the Faith wherever he is, or pioneering, becomes the greatest delight of his heart, the greatest goal of his existence. For such a person, inconveniences, hardships and sufferings are transformed into unsurpassing joy and happiness through divine confirmation and blessings which are showered upon him from the Invisible World. How thrilling and how inspiring to know that the believers who serve the Faith with 'heroism', 'constancy' and 'devotion' are watched by the Báb, Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Who, in the words of our Beloved Guardian, 'from the retreats of glory are applauding their acts, guiding their footsteps, vouchsafing their blessings and laying up in the store-houses of the Abhá Kingdom such treasures as only They can bestow.'

Leo Tolstoy wrote in one of his essays, ' . . . The meaning of life is not to be found in the attainment of his (man's) own individual aim, nor in the attainment of that of any association of individuals, but solely in serving that Supreme Will which has produced man and the entire universe for the attainment, not of the aims of man, but of the Superior Will which has produced him.' The Bahá'ís have only one supreme objective: to carry out the Supreme Will of Bahá'u'lláh and build the Kingdom of God on earth. This is a work of selfless devotion and love, and requires complete surrender of one's will to His Superior Will.

In one of Bahá'u'lláh's Tablets it is written, 'Patience is praiseworthy except when teaching the Cause of the Lord is concerned.' And in another Tablet He says, 'We, from this Great Prison, invite the people to turn to God, the Lord of the two Worlds. Do thou likewise for the Cause of God.' 'O ye friends!' wrote 'Abdu'l-Bahá, 'this is not the time of rest and tranquillity! This is not the season of silence and stillness.'

As we enter the Holy Year this month, let us remember in our prayers all the Bahá'í Pioneers throughout the world, particularly those in Africa. At this critical turning point in the history of the world, the African pioneers are engaged in bringing life and light to that vast and 'dark' continent which, ever since its acquaintance with modern 'civilisation', has been a prey to ever-growing political strife and racial hatred. The spirit of sacrifice of these pioneers, their courage and determination, their zeal and steadfastness and the great Fire of the love of Bahá'u'lláh burning in their hearts, have won for them the tremendous admiration of the Bahá'í World. Their exploits, already marvelously successful at their start, will constitute one of the most glorious and immortal chapters in the history of the Bahá'í Faith and will for ever remain the inspiration of countless generations of Bahá'ís in the years to come.

Let us also recall the words of Bahá'u'lláh describing one of His experiences one hundred years ago: 'God is My Witness, O people! I was asleep on My couch when lo! the Breeze of God wafting over Me roused Me from My slumber. His quickening spirit revived Me and My tongue was unloosed to voice His Call.'

Guided and inspired by our Beloved Guardian, let us, in this Holy Year, rededicate our lives in the service of the Faith, praying and supplicating that the 'Breeze of God' and 'His quickening spirit' may revive us and unloose our tongues 'to voice His Call'; 'For whoso hath recognised Me, will arise and serve Me with such determination that the powers of earth and heaven shall be unable to defeat his purpose.'

May the following soul-stirring words taken from one of the beautiful prayers of 'Abdu'l-Bahá bring us joy and strength in the service of the Faith:

*'Praise be unto Thee because Thou hast shewn unto us the highway of guidance, opened the doors of the Kingdom and manifested Thyself through the Sun of Reality . . .*

*'O Thou Almighty! We people are Thy servants and Thy poor ones! . . . We are walking in Thy path and have no aim or hope save the diffusion of Thy fragrances — so that the souls may raise the cry of: "O God! Guide us unto the straight path!" May they open their eyes by beholding the lights and become freed from the darkness of ignorancel May they walk around the lamp of guidancel . . .*

*'O Almighty! Look upon us with the glance of Thy mercifulness! Grant us heavenly confirmation! Bestow upon us the breaths of the Holy Spirit! So that we may become assisted in service and like unto brilliant stars may shine in these regions with the light of guidancel Verily, Thou art the Powerful, the Mighty and Thou art the Wise and the Seeing!'*

ZEINE N. ZEINE

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, p. 89. <sup>7</sup> From the Letter of March 29th, 1951.



## THE GUARDIAN'S MESSAGE TO THE AFRICA CONFERENCE, 1953

To the Hands of the Cause, the Members of the National Spiritual Assemblies, the pioneers, the resident believers and visitors attending the African Inter-continental Teaching Conference in Kampala, Uganda. Well-beloved friends:

I hail with a joyous heart the convocation in the heart of the African continent of the first of the four Inter-continental Teaching Conferences constituting the highlights of the world-wide celebrations of the Holy Year which commemorates the hundredth anniversary of the birth of the Mission of the Founder of our Faith. I welcome with open arms the unexpectedly large number of representatives of the pure-hearted and the spiritually receptive Negro race, so dearly loved by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, for whose conversion to His Father's Faith He so deeply yearned and whose interests He so ardently championed in the course of His memorable visit to the North American continent. I am reminded, on this historic occasion, of the significant words uttered by Bahá'u'lláh Himself, Who as attested by the Centre of the Covenant, in His Writings, 'compared the coloured people to the black pupil of the eye,' through which 'the light of the spirit shineth forth.' I feel particularly gratified by the substantial participation in this epoch-making Conference of the members of a race dwelling in a continent which for the most part has retained its primitive simplicity and remained uncontaminated by the evils of a gross, a rampant and cancerous materialism undermining the fabric of human society alike in the East and in the West, eating into the vitals of the conflicting peoples and races inhabiting the American, the European and the Asiatic continents and, alas, threatening to engulf in one common catastrophic convulsion the generality of mankind. I acclaim the preponderance of the members of this same race at so significant a Conference a phenomenon unprecedented in the annals of Bahá'í Conferences held during over a century, and auguring well for a corresponding multiplication in the number of the representatives of the yellow, the red and brown races of mankind dwelling respectively in the Far East, in the Far West and in the islands of the South Pacific Ocean, a multiplication designed ultimately to bring to a proper equipoise the divers ethnic elements comprised within the highly diversified world-embracing Bahá'í Fellowship.

I feel moved, on this auspicious occasion, to pay a warm tribute to the elected representatives, as well as the members, of the British, the Persian, the American, the Egyptian and the Indian Bahá'í Communities which have participated, in pursuance of their respective Plans, in the opening stage of a colossal teaching campaign, constituting a vital phase of the impending decade-long world crusade, and aiming at the spiritual conquest of the entire African continent. I desire in particular to express to all those gathered at this Conference my feelings of abiding appreciation of the magnificent rôle played, and of the remarkable prizes won, by the small band of Persian, British and American pioneers, in the course of the initial stage of this divinely propelled and mysteriously unfolding collective enterprise which has overshadowed both the Latin

American and European teaching campaigns launched in recent years, which is destined to exert an incalculable influence on the fortunes of the Faith throughout the world, and which may well have far-reaching repercussions among the two chief races dwelling in the North American continent.

To the American Bahá'í Community, the chief executor of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Divine Plan; to the British Bahá'í Community, destined to play in future decades a predominating rôle in opening to the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh not only the British Territories throughout the African continent, but the divers Dependencies of the British Crown scattered on the surface of the globe; to the Persian Bahá'í Community, at once the most venerable and most consistently persecuted among its sister communities in both the East and the West; to the Egyptian Bahá'í Community that may well boast of having erected in that continent the first pillar of the Universal House of Justice; to the Indian Bahá'í Community, fated to contribute, to a marked degree, to the spiritual quickening of the Indians constituting a notable element of the population of Africa — to these Communities I feel I must acknowledge my deep sense of thankfulness for the strenuous efforts exerted by their pioneers to raise aloft the standard of the Faith in the territories allocated to them in Liberia, Uganda, Tanganyika, the Gold Coast, Kenya, Somaliland, Nyasaland, Northern Rhodesia, Libya, Algeria, Zanzibar and Madagascar. To others who, though not following the fixed pattern of the Plan initiated for the present African campaign, have arisen to introduce the Faith in the territories of Sierra Leone, Angola, Mozambique and Southern Rhodesia I feel, moreover, a debt of gratitude is due for their share in extending the range of Bahá'í pioneer activity in that continent.

The hour is indeed propitious, as the climax of the world-wide rejoicings signalling the Holy Year approaches, for the National Spiritual Assemblies of these same Communities to gird up their loins, in collaboration with the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Iraq, in a supreme effort to launch, on the morrow of this fateful Conference, that phase of the ten-year crusade which, God willing, will culminate in the introduction of our glorious Faith in all the remaining territories of that vast continent as well as the chief neighbouring islands lying in the Indian and the Atlantic Oceans. The decade on whose threshold they now stand must, circumstances permitting, witness: *First*, the erection of three additional pillars within the confines of that continent and its neighbouring islands, designed to support, together with no less than forty-five other National Spiritual Assemblies to be established in other parts of the world, the final unit in the erection of the Administrative Order of the Bahá'ís of Central and East Africa, to be formed under the aegis of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the British Isles, with its seat in Kampala; the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of South and West Africa, to be formed under the aegis of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States of America, with its seat in Johannesburg; the National Spiritual Assembly of



the Bahá'ís of North-West Africa, to be formed under the aegis of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Egypt and Sudan, with its seat in Tunis. *Second*, the initial purchase of land for the future construction of three Mashriqu'l-Adhkars, one in Cairo, one in Kampala and one in Johannesburg, situated respectively in the north, the heart and the south of the African continent. *Third*, the opening of the following thirty-three virgin territories and islands: Cape Verde Is., Canary Is., French Somaliland, French Togoland, Mauritius, Northern Territories Protectorate, Portuguese Guinea, Reunion I., Spanish Guinea, St. Helena, and St. Thomas I., assigned to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States of America; Ashanti Protectorate, Basutoland, Bechuanaland; Italian Somaliland, Southern Rhodesia and Swaziland assigned to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Persia; French Equatorial Africa, French West Africa, Morocco (Int. Zone), Rio de Oro, Spanish Morocco and Spanish Sahara assigned to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Egypt and Sudan; Comoro Is., French Cameroons, Gambia, Ruanda-Urundi and Socotra I. assigned to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of India, Pakistan and Burma; the British Cameroons, British Togoland, Madeira and South-West Africa, assigned to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the British Isles; and Seychelles Is. assigned to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Iraq. *Fourth*, the translation and publication of Bahá'í literature in the following thirty-one African languages to be undertaken by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the British Isles: Accra, Afrikaans, Aladian, Ashanti, Banu, Bemba, Bua, Chuana, Gio, Gu, Jieng, Jolof, Kuanyama, Krongo, Kroo, Luimbi, Malagasy, Nubian, Pedi, Popo, Ronga, Sena, Shilha, Shona, Sobo, Suto, Wongo, Mosa, Yalunka, Yao, and Zulu. *Fifth*, the consolidation of the twenty-four following territories already opened to the Faith in the African continent: Angola, Belgian Congo, Gold Coast, Kenya, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Tanganyika, Uganda and Zululand allocated to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the British Isles; Abyssinia, Algeria, Eritrea, Libya, French Morocco, Somaliland, Sudan and Tunisia allocated to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Egypt and Sudan; Madagascar, Mozambique and Zanzibar allocated to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of India, Pakistan and Burma; Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland allocated to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Persia; Liberia and South Africa allocated to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States of America. *Sixth*, the establishment, circumstances permitting, of a National Bahá'í Court in the capital city of Egypt, the recognised centre of both the Islamic and Arab worlds, officially empowered to apply, in matters of personal status, the Laws and Ordinances revealed in the Kitab-i-Aqdas, the Mother-Book of the Bahá'í Revelation. *Seventh*, the incorporation of the three above-mentioned Regional National Spiritual Assemblies. *Eighth*, the establishment by these same National Spiritual Assemblies of National Bahá'í Endowments. *Ninth*, the establishment of a National Haziratu'l-Quds in Johannesburg and one in Tunis and the conversion into a similar institution of the

local Haziratu'l-Quds of Kampala. *Tenth*, the formation of a National Bahá'í Publishing Trust in Cairo. *Eleventh*, the formation of an Israel Branch of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Egypt and Sudan, authorised to hold, on behalf of its parent institution, property dedicated to the Holy Shrines at the World Centre of the Faith in the State of Israel. *Twelfth*, the appointment, during Ridván 1954, by the Hand of the Cause in Africa, of an auxiliary Board of nine members who will, in conjunction with the six National Spiritual Assemblies participating in the African Campaign, assist, through periodic and systematic visits to Bahá'í Centres, in the efficient and prompt execution of the Plans formulated for the prosecution of the teaching campaign in the African continent.

May the six aforementioned National Spiritual Assemblies, aided by the Hand of the Cause appointed in that continent, and the auxiliary Board to be chosen by him, and supported by the national committees and sub-committees to be formed in due course, and reinforced by the constant and energetic efforts of an ever-swelling number of pioneers, whether settlers or itinerant teachers, and assisted by the whole-hearted collaboration of the indigenous believers in all localities, be spiritually welded into a unit at once dynamic and coherent, and be suffused with the creative, the directing and propelling forces proceeding from the Source of the Revelation Himself, and be made, as the projected campaign unfolds, the vehicle of His grace from on High, and prove themselves worthy and effective instruments for the execution and ultimate consummation of one of the most thrilling and far-reaching enterprises undertaken in the Formative Age of the Faith and constituting one of the noblest phases of the most glorious crusade ever launched in the course of Bahá'í history for the systematic propagation of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh over the surface of the entire planet.

#### A CABLE FROM THE GUARDIAN TO THE BAHÁ'Í WORLD

Eve convocation history making, long eagerly anticipated African Intercontinental Conference, share communities Bahá'í world joyous news rapid progress twin sacred undertakings launched (on the) Mountain God (and the) Holy Plain 'Akká, destined culminate erection worthy sepulchres Herald, Author Bahá'í Revelation. World wide celebrations Holy Year inaugurated last October heightened course present month through holding epoch making gathering, moving steadily towards climax (during) approaching Ridván festivities, greatly enhanced latest developments institutions World Centre Faith. Construction third unit Báb's Shrine terminated, synchronizing safe arrival Port Haifa last consignment stones ordered Italy, totalling over thirteen hundred tons. First section brim dome constituting base topmost tier triple crown majestic edifice erected, heralding placing Ridván period tiles, as well as construction ribs golden dome. Landscaping initiated inception Holy Year thirteen thousand square metre area immediately surrounding Qiblih Bahá'í world, involving extension its outer sanctuary, to be



designated henceforth Harami-Aqdas, virtually concluded, paving way successively (for the) embellishment, extensive illumination, entire area, erection stately portals, presaging rearing future date magnificent mausoleum (in) its heart. Striking enhancement beauty, stateliness most holy spot Bahá'í world, constitutes befitting tribute memory Founder Faith within hallowed area adjacent His resting place occasion Centenary Celebrations birth His glorious Mission.

February 9, 1953.

### THE PRACTICAL APPROACH

Every Bahá'í individually, as well as every Bahá'í Community collectively, has the responsibility of telling the peoples of his locality about the Faith. Fundamentally, this fact seems to imply that *every person a Bahá'í meets* should be given at least an initial opportunity of hearing of the Faith. More still it implies that we must make special efforts to meet, and tell, more and more people about Bahá'u'lláh and His Message. Of these 'Special Efforts' the Guardian has written:

'Let him also attempt to devise such methods as association with clubs, exhibitions, and societies, lectures on subjects akin to the teachings and ideals of his Cause such as temperance, morality, social welfare, religious and racial tolerance, economic co-operation, Islam, and comparative religions, or participation in social, cultural, humanitarian, charitable, and educational organisations and enterprises, which will open up to him a multitude of ways and means whereby he can enlist successively the sympathy, the support, and ultimately the allegiance of those with whom he comes in contact.'

### A Pilgrim's Note

Extract from letter from Mrs. Beatrice Ashton, Chairman of Bahá'í World Education Committee to H. McKinley. (Mrs. Ashton has just made the pilgrimage to Haifa).

'The great burden of work which still falls on our very beloved and revered Guardian, even with the International Council functioning there too, is really overwhelming. He is indescribable—such dynamic energy and clarity, and thoughtfulness! When he speaks, his vibrant voice seems to be carrying with it the very power of action and fulfilment. What he could do, to what great victories he could lead us, if only we could wholly carry out his slightest instructions! We cause the delays and frustrations, through our immaturity and our lag in belief—the Cause is very, very great, if we could only more realise how great! If we could only put first, in our every thought and action, how we may help our beloved Guardian! And the atmosphere streaming forth from the Holy Shrines and Holy Places is surely carrying to the world the spirit of healing and guidance which the world so sorely needs.'

### TEACHING CONFERENCE, 1953

'Consecration unrivalled . . .'

'Goals first epoch-making stage glorious overseas mission followers Bahá'u'lláh British Isles nobly achieved.' With these words from the beloved Guardian ringing in their ears, words which were later emphasised by Mickie Mihaeloff representing the Africa Committee, when he told us that believers in East Africa now numbered 269 in eighteen centres, the seventy attendants at Teaching Conference from the very beginning were roused to a sense of participation in an occasion fraught with achievement and promise.

This sense of unity with great events, cemented by the decision to cable and write to the African centres where the British pioneers are winning such 'magnificent success,' and by the reciprocation of the many messages to the Conference culminating in the cable to the Guardian, was to pervade all the sessions, and to draw forth valuable mature contributions in consultation, to evoke three offers to pioneer during the Conference itself and at least one more immediately after it, to arouse in all participants the urge to promise fulfilment of the call to 'exert utmost fan flame pioneering spirit, utilise every available means ensure all aspects triumphant consummation Plan.'

It must suffice to catalogue the most memorable contributions. These comprised the great message from the Guardian; the rousing statement by Hasan Balyuzi which linked the British believers with the great impending world crusade and the Most Great Jubilee; the masterly review by Marion Hofman of the cables, letters, appeals and statements of the Guardian since 1950 in which she indicated that both the pillars of the World Order had been reinforced in that period; the five-fold survey of the present situation of the British Bahá'í Community, supplied by the four Teaching Committees and the Consolidation Committee, showing that with three months to go there were twelve gaps to fill even to maintain the assemblies at minimum strength; the noble offer announced and most gratefully accepted from the London Community to provide five pioneers; the spiritual and practical aspects of the 'devotion to match the Dawnbreakers' followed by the session when the Guardian and the World Centre were brought near to us by Mehrangiz Munsiff recounting the experiences of her recent pilgrimage, distributing flowers from the Shrines and touching palms with the fragrance of attar of roses specially sent for the purpose; the four speakers who so ably combined to provide the interdependent essentials of individual and collective teaching and the fruits of teaching that comprise the new institutions and the consolidation of the framework of the Administrative Order; the moving paper sent us by George Townshend, Hand of the Cause, recalling the experiences of Bahá'u'lláh Himself in the Siyah-Chal; the extensive summary of the preparations and plans made by the Centenary Committee and its sub-committees for the befitting celebration of the Great Jubilee year. The news that the Six Year Plan deficit had been halved and the remaining amount all but absorbed by the small and medium



loans of the friends and the information that contributions of the British Bahá'í Community to the International Bahá'í Fund now totalled £277 3s. and to the Báb's Shrine Fund £1,072 19s. 10d. helped not a little to underpin confidence.

This survey is appropriately completed by quoting first from Hasan Balyuzi's statement and finally the words of the Master that closed George Townshend's paper — 'No more than three fleeting months are left to complete our tasks of the Two Year Plan. In three months' time we will be celebrating the Great Jubilee. In three months' time we will enter the Ten Years that are to culminate in the undreamed of glories of the Most Great Jubilee. Indeed, in a month's time at the First Intercontinental Conference of the Holy Year we will hear the first of the four messages of our Beloved Guardian, which are to send the entire Bahá'í world into the Ten Year Crusade.'

'O my friends, arise to tend the pure and widely-scattered seed planted in the hearts of men. Dedicate yourselves wholly to the service of humanity. Then will the world be turned into a paradise; then will the surface of the earth mirror forth the glory of the Abha Kingdom.'

. NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY

## COMMUNITY NEWS

**BOURNEMOUTH.** A talk by Hugh McKinley, given at a meeting in the Devonshire Hotel, was reported in the *Bournemouth Echo*.

During recent months welcome visitors to Bournemouth have been Mr. and Mrs. Aazam and Ian Semple.

Mrs. Cranmer spoke at a meeting held in the Alexandra Hotel to a gathering of the Bournemouth Unity Group.

Regular study groups and firesides are held in the homes of Mrs. Beale and Mrs. Olga Mills.

## Change of Address

*Secretary, Brighton L.S.A. and Southern Teaching Committee:* Hugh McKinley, 1 Dorset Gardens, Brighton.

## Addresses

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

*National Treasurer:* Dr. John Mitchell, Dawnedge Thatch, Apsley 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.

## THE AFRICA CONFERENCE

An account of the Conference is being prepared for circulation to all Bahá'í journals; pending publication of this, we think a very brief report will be of interest.

The first of the four Inter-Continental Conferences was held in Kampala, Uganda, from February 12th to 18th, being preceded on the afternoon of February 11th by an opening Unity Feast. It was a moving and memorable occasion for all those present, and in all about 230 people were present, including ten Hands of the Cause and the representatives of nineteen countries. The largest contingent was of course the local Uganda community and the next in size the party of Persians, over forty strong. The Guardian cabled urging that as many of the new African believers as possible should be there, inviting them as his guests, and altogether there were over 120 of them present. The happy faces of these new African friends and their joy and enthusiasm in the Cause were a revelation and an inspiration to us all. The site of the Conference, a large tent in the garden of the Kampala Hazira, chosen because a hall could not be found, proved to be ideal for the purpose; it was not too formal and, with the sides open to a gentle breeze, it was cool and pleasant. It was closely packed for all the sessions, and everything was followed with close attention — all the proceedings were given in English, in Persian, and in Ateso, spoken by the majority of the African friends. A number of interesting and instructive talks were given and there was much useful discussion, but the greatest interest was devoted to the consideration of the new plans for Africa in the Ten-Year Crusade, contained in the Guardian's message brought by his special representative, Mr. Leroy Ioas. Outstanding events were the showing of a portrait of His Holiness the Báb, the new films of the Holy Shrines, and Mr. Ioas's farewell message on the Guardian's behalf. So memorable too was the association together of Bahá'ís of so many races and from so many countries in happy friendship and the joy of the pioneers, some of them so lonely, in being in a gathering of Bahá'ís once more.

Two public meetings were held in connection with the Conference, both of which attracted enquirers to the Faith. One, held in the evening in the hall of Makerere University College, attracted mainly visitors from the European and Indian population; speakers were Mr. Horace Holley and Mr. Hasan Balyuzi. The other, held in the afternoon in the tent at the Hazira, attracted mainly Africans; speakers were Mrs. Dorothy Baker and Mr. Matthew Bullock, an American Negro.

After the Conference some of the visitors spread out over Africa paying visits to various places, including Nairobi, Dar-es-Salaam, Ethiopia, and Egypt, and two Hands of the Cause, Mr. Banani and Mr. Khadem, are visiting all the various centres and isolated believers in Africa. A small party, including a member of our committee, spent two days in the Teso district of Uganda, where there has been such a phenomenal development of the Faith, visiting some of the African believers in their villages and holding meetings there.

AFRICA COMMITTEE



## THE BAHÁ'Í CALENDAR

### ANNIVERSARIES

Feast of Ridván (Declaration of Bahá'u'lláh), April 21st—May 2nd, 1863.

Declaration of the Báb, May 23rd, 1844.

Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh, May 29th, 1892.

Martyrdom of the Báb, July 9th, 1850.

Birth of the Báb, October 20th, 1819.

Birth of Bahá'u'lláh, November 12th, 1817.

Day of the Covenant, November 26th.

Ascension of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, November 28th, 1921.

Period of the Fast, nineteen days beginning March 2nd.

Feast of Naw-Rúz (Bahá'í New Year), March 21st.

### HOLY DAYS ON WHICH WORK SHOULD BE SUSPENDED

The First Day of Ridván, April 21st.

The Ninth Day of Ridván, April 29th.

The Twelfth Day of Ridván, May 2nd.

The Anniversary of the Declaration of the Báb, May 23rd.

The Anniversary of the Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh, May 29th.

The Anniversary of the Martyrdom of the Báb, July 9th.

The Anniversary of the Birth of the Báb, October 20th.

The Anniversary of the Birth of Bahá'u'lláh, November 12th.

The Feast of Naw-Rúz, March 21st.

### NINETEEN DAY FEASTS

Month	Arabic Name	English Name	First Day
First	Bahá	Splendour	March 21st
Second	Jalál	Glory	April 9th
Third	Jamál	Beauty	April 28th
Fourth	'Azamat	Grandeur	May 17th
Fifth	Núr	Light	June 5th
Sixth	Rahmat	Mercy	June 24th
Seventh	Kalimát	Words	July 13th
Eighth	Kamál	Perfection	August 1st
Ninth	Asmá'	Names	August 20th
Tenth	'Izzat	Might	September 8th
Eleventh	Mashíyyat	Will	September 27th
Twelfth	'Ilm	Knowledge	October 16th
Thirteenth	Qudrat	Power	November 4th
Fourteenth	Qawl	Speech	November 23rd
Fifteenth	Masá'il	Questions	December 12th
Sixteenth	Sharaf	Honour	December 31st
Seventeenth	Sultán	Sovereignty	January 19th
Eighteenth	Mulk	Dominion	February 7th
Nineteenth	'Alá'	Loftiness	March 2nd

The names of the days of each month are the same as the names of the months.

Ayyám-i-Há (Intercalary Days), February 26th to March 1st inclusive, four in ordinary years and five in leap years.

The Bahá'í day starts and ends at sunset and the time for celebrating commemorative meetings should be fixed by counting from sunset and according to the sun, disregarding any daylight-saving arrangement.

Certain of the feasts and anniversaries should be commemorated at the time specified, if at all feasible:

The First Day of Ridván, at about 3 p.m. on April 21st.

The Anniversary of the Declaration of the Báb, at about two hours after sunset on May 22nd.

The Anniversary of the Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh, at 3 a.m. on May 29th.

The Anniversary of the Martyrdom of the Báb, at about noon on July 9th.

The Ascension of 'Abdu'l-Bahá at 1 a.m. on November 28th.

Recognition of the Faith can be promoted by applying to be excused work on the Nine Holy Days and we are enjoined by our beloved Guardian to do this. Even though we are not successful the first time we are sure to obtain permission eventually and those who have independent businesses can assist by refraining from work on those days and indicating the reason in a prominent way.

'The year sixty A.H. (1844 A.D.), the year of the Declaration of the Báb, must be regarded as the beginning of the Badí' Calendar.' In these words, addressed to His amanuensis, Bahá'u'lláh authenticated the Bahá'í Calendar which was originally ordained by the Báb in His book *Kitáb-i-Asmá'*. Professor E. G. Browne, in his book *Traveller's Narrative*, has a very beautiful explanation expressing the contrast between the old calendars, none of them congruent with each other, and often illogical in choice of name or basis, and our new and wonderful calendar founded in simplicity.

'The Báb, The Primal Point of a new creation, brought humanity into a new division of time in a calendar of nineteen months. All through our past heritage the months of the years and the days of the week have borne the names of pagan feasts and Roman holidays. The Báb swept these landmarks away, and replaced them by the Qualities of: Splendour, Glory, Beauty, Grandeur, Light, Mercy, Perfection, Names, Might, Will, Knowledge, Power, Speech, Questions, Honour, Sovereignty, Dominion and Loftiness.

'Meditating upon these sublime attributes, man is enabled to gaze beyond the curve of time, wherein the swing and change of planetary movement exists, to the eternal qualities that stabilise the soul. As the seasons return with their quaternary beauty, as the seed sacrifices to the mystery of the harvest, we see reflected in the mirror of the physical world the spiritual spring-time when the Word of God is planted in the heart of man by the coming of God's Messengers.

'The cycle of the year ends with a period of nineteen days of fasting to prepare for the coming of Naw-Rúz, the New Year, when both the physical and spiritual beauty blend and we advance to another year in which to mature the soul and prepare "for the everlasting kingdom".'



## CHILD EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The Child Education Committee considers that one of its main tasks this year has been the preparation of a suitable syllabus for the teaching of the Bahá'í Faith to children. During its meetings, however, there has been a good deal of general discussion on the upbringing of Bahá'í children and how parents might best ensure their children's happiness in the Faith. Various resolutions arose from this discussion, and these were later presented to a gathering of British and Persian parents at Summer School for their comment and advice. It was felt that more Bahá'ís — parents and otherwise — might be interested in the ideas arising from this very helpful and stimulating meeting: one of the recommendations was published in the November, 1952, edition of the *Journal*, and below, we share with you some of the others.

The need for a Bahá'í example in the lives of the parents was strongly felt by everyone. This is fundamentally the only effective way of teaching the Faith in spirit as well as letter.

The power of the revealed word was, however, firmly acknowledged. Even though the direct meaning of the words is beyond the child's understanding, it is a great blessing for the child to be familiar with the flow of the Bahá'í Scriptures and to have phrases of prayer and exhortation unconsciously stored in the memory as a future source of strength and comfort.

Prayer for the child as well as with it is very necessary. In Persia Bahá'í prayers are chanted for the children even while they are new-born babies, and they therefore literally 'grow up' with prayer.

Some Persian parents were concerned with the welfare of Persian students whose parents are not in this country. It was agreed that they are a big spiritual responsibility to their communities. In England the Bahá'í influence is less strong than in Persia, and there is the danger that the unusual freedom, and the attraction of outside amusements, might draw these young people away from the Faith. The British community must help them think of themselves as British Bahá'ís while they are here, not 'Persian Bahá'ís exiled from home.' Whenever Persian students have consolidated themselves as British Bahá'ís, their community has found their presence an inspiration and a blessing, and the work of the Cause has flourished there.

A further recommendation from this meeting at Summer School was that, when children's classes are held, they should take the form of a Feast: an opening devotional, then the discussion, or lesson, then a period for social exchange and refreshment — with, perhaps, games. It is always desirable, of course, that when the adult community is celebrating some special Feast, such as Naw-Rúz, the children should have a separate celebration, as long as there are sufficient children in a community to make this reasonable.

We would like to share with you the good news that children's classes are being held regularly in Manchester, Liverpool and Blackpool. In the two latter towns this is a new development. In Liverpool although there are no Bahá'í children, this enterprising

community provides delightful Bahá'í talks for children of contacts, while their parents attend a fireside in another room. We should be very glad to have news from other towns.

MRS. PITCHER (*Chairman*)  
MISS M. SHANKS (*Secretary*)  
6 Norfolk Rd., Sheffield 2.  
MISS T. DUNN

## STOCKHOLM CONFERENCE

The Third Inter-Continental Bahá'í Teaching Conference, in accordance with the Guardian's directive, is to take place in Stockholm, Sweden, July 21st to July 26th, 1953.

As the appointed Convenor of this Conference, the European Teaching Committee extends a warm and loving invitation to the friends throughout the Bahá'í world to be present and participate in the deliberations, which will be directed particularly to Europe's part in this glorious fate-laden Ten-Year Global Crusade.

The housing arrangements which have been made include rooms in Youth 'Hostels,' in the Domus or Student Hotel and in the Hotel Malmen, ranging in price from \$1.00 to \$4.50 per day (without meals). Anyone contemplating attending the Conference should write immediately to:

Miss Honor Kempton,  
37 Quai Wilson,  
Geneva, Switzerland

If definite reservation is desired, please designate which of the three categories of accommodation you desire.

EUROPEAN TEACHING COMMITTEE

## Shrine and International Funds

Mr. Norton reports that by January 28th £1,077 6s. 10d. had been contributed to the Shrine of the Báb Fund, of which £219 19s. 7d. came from Assemblies and £857 7s. 3d. from individuals. Contributions to the International Fund reached £277 3s. 0d.

## BAHA'Í PUBLISHING TRUST

### 'The Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh'

'The spirit of this age is the Covenant and the Testament of God. It is like the pulsating artery in the body of the world.'

'Abdu'l-Bahá

There is no Bahá'í who cannot gain in faith, knowledge and capacity to serve through study of this compilation.

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