

# BAHÁ'Í JOURNAL

Published by

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

No. 102

Bahá'í Year 109

DECEMBER 1952

## 'CONSECRATION UNEXAMPLED IN THE ANNALS OF THE FAITH IN THE BRITISH ISLES'

Teaching Conference, 1953

Teaching Conference will be held in Sheffield in the Leopold Suite of the Grand Hotel on 10th/11th January. The British Bahá'í Community is called to consult upon our present position and the work that lies ahead of us. Commenting upon last year's Teaching Conference our beloved Guardian wrote: 'Undoubtedly the dedication of the friends to their tasks at that time facilitated the achievement of their goals in April . . .' Again we have goals to achieve by April so that we may be fully entitled 'to play a leading role in the future proclamation of the Message of Baha'u'lláh to the multitudes that live beneath the shadow of the British Crown.' Let us, each one, make every effort to attend and participate as fully as possible so that collectively we may demonstrate our love, our faith, and fulfil our beloved Guardian's cherished hope expressed in the words which have been chosen as the overall title for the Conference.

*'Consecration unexampled in the annals of the Faith in the British Isles.'*

The broad outline of the Conference is as follows:

*Saturday*

2.0 — 4.30 p.m. Conference Opening. Chairman:  
R. H. Backwell

*Saturday (contd.)*

Devotional Programme and Music.  
Africa Committee.  
International Review and  
Preparation for the Ten Year Plan.  
Hasan Balyuzi.

5.0 — 6.30 p.m. Meaning of the Two Year Plan.  
Alma Gregory.

Where we now Stand. Teaching  
Committee Representatives.

8.0 — 10.0 p.m. N.S.A. Session. Chairman: Hasan  
Balyuzi.

'Devotion to Match the Dawn-  
breakers.' Speakers: John Ferraby  
and Dick Backwell.

*Sunday*

10.0 a.m.

'Vital Mission at Home.'

12.30 p.m.

Panel of Speakers.

2.0 — 3.50 p.m.

'Bahá'u'lláh in the Siyah-Chal.'  
George Townshend.  
Centenary Committee.

3.50 — 4.30 p.m.

Summary. Devotional Programme.

CONSOLIDATION COMMITTEE

### For Meditation

My God, my Well-Beloved! No place is there when once Thy laws have been sent down, and no refuge can be found for any soul after the revelation of Thy commandments. Thou hast inspired the Pen with the mysteries of Thine eternity, and bidden it teach man that which he knoweth not, and caused him to partake of the living waters of truth from the cup of Thy Revelation and Thine inspiration.

### 'THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE GUARDIAN'S MESSAGES'

Year by year, as the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh unfolds, we receive cables and letters from the Guardian. Do we, I wonder, fully realise the significance of

these documents and the exalted station of the source from which they flow?

Let us re-read for a moment some of the passages from 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Will and Testament which refer to Shogi Effendi:

'Salutation and praise, blessing and glory rest upon that primal branch of the Divine and Sacred Lote-Tree, grown out, blest, tender, verdant and flourishing from the Twin Holy Trees; the most wondrous, unique and priceless pearl that doth gleam from out the twin surging seas . . .

'O ye, the faithful loved ones of 'Abdu'l-Bahá! It is incumbent upon you to take the greatest care of Shogi Effendi, the twig that hath branched from and the fruit given forth by the two hallowed and Divine

Lote-Trees, that no dust of despondency and sorrow may stain his radiant nature, that day by day he may wax greater in happiness, in joy and spirituality, and may grow to become even as a fruitful tree.

'For he is, after 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the guardian of the Cause of God; the Afnan, the Hands of the Cause and the beloved of the Lord must obey him and turn unto him. He that obeyeth him not, hath not obeyed God; he that turneth away from him, hath turned away from God; and he that denieth him, hath denied the True One.'

How powerful are these words, and how plain is their meaning! What thoughts must fill our minds when we realise that our beloved Shoghi Effendi represents the Holy Families of both the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh, and unites in his person the Royal House of David with the Sacred Line of Muhammad's descendants. Bahá'u'lláh wrote many inspiring words about the station of kinship—but how much greater must be the station of Guardianship, the station of one the 'shelter' of whose 'shade' shadoweth all mankind. For the Guardian, if we draw our conclusions aright, is the earthly head of that Kingdom whose Eternal King is God Himself.

We would do well to bear these things always in mind, for we in the West, while our Faith can claim so few declared adherents, tend to underestimate its importance and the importance of its Guardian.

On the other hand, as Shoghi Effendi himself emphasises, we must beware of exalting the Guardian to a station equal to that of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. 'No Guardian of the Faith, I feel it my solemn duty to place on record, can ever claim to be the perfect exemplar of the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh or the stainless mirror that reflects His Light. Though overshadowed by the unfailing, the unerring protection of Bahá'u'lláh and of the Báb, and however much he may share with 'Abdu'l-Bahá the right and obligation to interpret the Bahá'í teachings, he remains essentially human and cannot, if he wishes to remain faithful to his trust, arrogate to himself, under any pretence whatsoever, the rights, the privileges and prerogatives which Bahá'u'lláh has chosen to confer upon His Son.'

If, dear friends, we are to protect ourselves against the danger of letting our love for Shoghi Effendi and the picture which the words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá conjure up, lead us into the error of over-exalting his station, it is essential that we hold fast to the principle of adoring the Light rather than the Lamp. For, let there be no mistake, through the utterances of the Guardian there streams the Light of God's infallible guidance upon the tasks before us. It is the Blessed spirit of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh which rules the Bahá'í world and which, through the Guardian, interprets for us our Scriptures and guides our building of the Kingdom of God. The Guardian is the heart of the world and his messages are the blood which surges through the arteries of the Bahá'í world giving us life and movement. His words in these letters and cables convey to us the will and summons of our Lord the Most High—how can we lay aside these messages before we have read them and re-read them, until their meaning is clear to our minds and engraved upon our souls.

CONSOLIDATION COMMITTEE

## NEWS FROM AFRICA

*Africa Conference.* Arrangements for the Conference have followed a very chequered career and till a couple of months ago it was still uncertain whether in the end it would be possible to hold it in Kampala. Finally sufficient hotel accommodation was reserved and permission received to hold the sessions in a marquee in the grounds of the Haziratu'l-Quds. Very fortunately, too, one of the friends in New York was able to obtain for us a suitably-sized tent from Army stock at a reasonable price, something we had been unable to locate in East Africa.

The programme, which has been approved by the Guardian, will be in two parts. The first three days will be devoted to the tasks of the Ten Year Crusade in Africa, a free day for sightseeing will follow and the final three days will be spent studying the Covenant, the Bahá'í Life and the Bahá'í Administration, for the benefit of the new communities all over Africa. The Guardian has given permission for all the Hands of the Cause who are present to be asked to speak in the programme and most of the sessions will be introduced by one or more of them.

The actual duration of the Conference will be from 12th to 18th February, but a Unity Feast for the visitors and the local friends will be held on the afternoon before, 11th February.

Two public meetings are planned in connection with the Conference, one on the Sunday afternoon for the African contacts and the other one evening for Europeans and Asiatics, for which invitations will be sent to officials and other well-known residents. This division of contacts has no intention of racial discrimination; it is necessary because of the situation in Kampala whereby people who do not have cars seldom go out in the evenings.

It is also hoped that a number of the visitors to the Conference will be able to help with teaching work both in Kampala and other parts of Uganda. Moreover the Guardian has instructed Mr. Zikrullah Khadem to visit all the friends in Africa after the Conference, in the same way as he recently visited all the believers in Europe. Much activity will surely result from such inspiration and help.

*Liberia.* Valerie Wilson, a pioneer from the U.S., left for Monrovia on 5th November. The friends there now number twenty and a woman teacher is badly needed to contact the women and help restore the balance to an almost all-male community. Bill Foster, the present pioneer, has been highly complimented on his work as a teacher at the University and his work has moreover led to contacts in other Liberian towns.

*Kenya.* Mrs. Suriya Yazdi and her children have now arrived in Nairobi and Mr. Afsharian from Persia has also reached there. A Group has been formed with Aziz Yazdi as chairman and Ted Cardell as secretary.

Mr. St. Barbe Baker is now on his way across the desert from North Africa to Uganda. His expedition, in which he is accompanied by two other Englishmen, has the object of helping to arrest the dangerous spread of the desert into the farmlands by planting quick-growing trees. He hopes eventually to found a university of the Sahara to study the problems of controlling and reducing the desert. AFRICA COMMITTEE

## AFRICA LETTERS

The following letters from the Guardian to the Africa Committee and African Assemblies are the first of a series which will appear in successive issues of the Journal.

6th December, 1951.

Mr. David Hofman,  
Secretary, Africa Committee.

Dear Bahá'í Brother,

Your letters of 5th and 22nd November (enclosures were also received) have been received and the beloved Guardian has instructed me to answer you on his behalf . . .

The Guardian feels that the next step in Bahá'í literature might well be the publication of a more comprehensive work in Luganda and Swahili. However, he would like the Africa Committee to undertake pamphlets in other languages as well: let him know what languages the Committee proposes.

He attaches, as you know, the greatest importance to the work of your Committee; and is tremendously impressed by the progress being made in Africa, and by the capacity, tenacity and enthusiasm the British Africa Committee is showing in handling its share of this extremely important campaign. His prayers are frequently offered on your behalf.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,  
(Signed) R. RABBANI

6th February, 1952.

Bahá'í Group of Kampala.

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

Your letter of 27th January was received by the beloved Guardian, through the kindness of Mr. and Mrs. Banani.

He was most touched to receive your contribution for the Shrine of the Báb, a receipt for which I am enclosing.

It has brought the greatest joy to his heart to have these dear believers here; and he is prolonging their pilgrimage in order to discuss thoroughly with them the work being done in Uganda, and indeed, in Africa, a work to which he attaches the greatest possible importance.

A source of deep joy and satisfaction was the news of the declaration of Mr. Chrispin Kajubi and Mr. Fred Bigabwa. He was so pleased to have photographs of them, and he has placed them in the Mansion, as the two first Bahá'ís in Uganda, representative of the tribes of that country.

The Guardian feels sure that, with wisdom, dedication, tact and prayer, your Group will be able to spread this Divine Message there to peoples of all races; and lay not only a lasting foundation for your own Community, but prepare the way for the great All-Africa Teaching Conference, which will be held there in 1953, and to which the Bahá'ís all over the world are already looking forward with much eagerness.

He assures you that you are all remembered in his

loving prayers in the Holy Shrines, and that your services to the Faith are deeply appreciated.

With warm Bahá'í love,

R. RABBANI

(In the Guardian's handwriting):

*May the Spirit of Baha'u'lláh powerfully sustain you in your high endeavours, aid you to extend rapidly the range of your historic and meritorious accomplishments, and lend a tremendous impetus to the onward march of our beloved faith in that vast and promising continent.*

Your True Brother,

SHOGHI

## BAHA'Í WORLD

ALASKA. Two Bahá'ís of Anchorage helping the local U.N.A. won third prize with a float in the annual Fourth of July Parade. The float carried a large globe and depicted citizens of various nationalities.

BURMA. Large numbers of Buddhist monks are reported by the Mandalay Community to have attended the public meeting held at the Bahá'í Hall, in commemoration of the Bahá'í Holy Days, and to have asked very intelligent questions about the Faith.

CANADA. With seven and a half months of their plan yet to go the Canadian Bahá'ís still need fifty-nine more believers to achieve Assembly status in fourteen localities, of which eleven are goals of the Plan. They were encouraged by the success at Westmount, Quebec, the first goal city to reach its numbers, and by the steadily mounting numbers of new believers reported each month.

The Canadian Government now recognises Bahá'í contributions as carrying exemption from income tax and accepts receipts of local and national treasurer as proof of donation.

From St. John, New Brunswick, it is reported that permission was given by the Tourist Bureau at the famous Reversing Falls to leave a rack of pamphlets. The rack needed to be refilled four times in a fortnight.

EGYPT. Land in the vicinity of Ramleh, Alexandria, the suburb where 'Abdu'l-Bahá lived when he was in Egypt, has been acquired for a Bahá'í Summer School.

SARAWAK. Jimmy Fozdar, pioneer, continues to obtain excellent publicity for the Cause in the *Sarawak Tribune*. He reports that of the forty students of the Cause in Kuching the closest are three Chinese, three Dyaks and one Indian, an excellent augury for the future in that land of many races.

U.S.A. Three hundred people attended the Fortieth Anniversary Commemoration on 28th June of the Unity Feast given by 'Abdu'l-Bahá at West Inglewood.

Boston has acquired for its Centre the room where 'Abdu'l-Bahá spoke in 1912.

A script containing a clear statement of the Bahá'í Teachings as they apply to the individual, but without mentioning the Faith by name, was broadcast locally on 196 stations and on the Voice of America in six languages and on 140 Armed Forces Radio Service Stations overseas.

Three times during this last year the Faith was broadcast by television, twice in Chicago and once in Delaware when a typical Bahá'í Fireside was presented in a half-hour programme.

## SOME ANSWERS by GEORGE TOWNSHEND

**Question:** Is there anything in the Bible to prove that religion must be in agreement with our reason?

**Answer:** Yes. Isaiah shows that God Himself wishes men to reason with Him (Is. i, 18). 'Come now and let us reason together, saith the Lord.'

Peter too wrote (I Pet. iii, 15), 'Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you.'

Paul likewise wrote (I Thess. v, 21), 'Prove all things, hold fast that which is good.' He acted accordingly himself when (Acts xviii, 4) 'he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks,' and again (Acts xvii, 2) when he 'three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the Scriptures.'

Jesus Christ taught men to use reason to support faith when He said (Matt. vi, 30; Luke xii, 28) 'Wherefore if God so clothes the grass of the field which to-day is and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?'

**Question:** How can we be sure that the promises of Christ to return are not merely the descent of the Holy Spirit on the Churches?

**Answer:** Jesus said to His disciples, 'Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world' (Matt. xxviii, 20).

He also said to His disciples, 'I go away and come again unto you' (John xiv, 28).

These are two distinct promises. The first refers to His continuing presence through the Holy Spirit. The second to His departure and His return.

**Question:** What are the signs of His coming and how are they fulfilled?

**Answer:** The signs of the Second Coming of Christ given in the Bible are many and various. Some of them seem to contradict others. All however are reconciled and fulfilled in the Bahá'í Faith through the Coming of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh.

For example:

It is promised (Mk. xiii, 26) Christ will come with power and great glory, that He shall be as the lightning shining across the heavens from the East to the West (Luke xvii, 24 and Mtt. xxiv, 27), and on the other hand that he shall come as 'a thief in the night' (I Thess. v, 2, and Luke xii, 39) as 'A snare,' taking people 'unawares.'

These signs are fulfilled to-day through the unique majesty and range of Baha'u'lláh's Message, through His giving it to mankind while imprisoned, through its rapid extension around the globe, through its educative effect upon human minds impelling them towards an understanding of the oneness of mankind, through its breaking up the old material world order and creating a spiritual system throughout the globe instead, and in many other ways. He is the first of all the Revelators to claim that He represents the Glory of God Himself; others were entitled 'Friend of God' (as Abraham), 'Interlocutor with God' (as Moses), 'Son of God' (as Jesus Christ).

The light of His Revelation shone rapidly and brilliantly from the East of the Holy Land and Persia, even in the Báb's Era and much more so from 1890 and

after, till in recent years the Faith has been propagated from the West chiefly and America has given shape to the administrative system revealed in 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Will and Testament. This fulfils Christ's prophecy about the enlightenment of the West.

At the same time the world at large, including its monarchs, its clergy and its philosophers, are utterly unconscious that Christ has returned, and are taken unawares, caught in a snare of prejudice and superstition because the spiritual darkness of their hearts and souls has blinded them so that they cannot understand or perceive the presence of their Lord among them.

## Community News

**BOURNEMOUTH.** Mr. J. Povey, of Torquay, gave a fireside talk on 21st September and on 6th October. Mrs. Ford, U.S.A., held two meetings in Bournemouth, one at the Devonshire Hotel and a follow-up in the evening.

The Birthday of the Báb was celebrated at the home of Mrs. Mills, at Wimborne.

A public meeting in connection with the film 'Civilization on Trial' was shown at the Municipal College Hall on 31st October. Mrs. Beale, who has been working on the Committee for Racial Amity had the happy idea of calling all the representatives of the various organisations in Bournemouth for a Committee.

Mrs. Cranmer gave a talk to the Bournemouth Unity Centre on 24th October. This Group, together with the Get Together has been very helpful to the friends, offering their platforms on several occasions.

We regret to report the removal of Mrs. Palmer to Salisbury and Miss B. Simpson to Tunbridge Wells. Mr. Twycross who left for Birmingham recently is back in Bournemouth.

We are happy to report two declarations, Mrs. Kellegher of Christchurch (daughter of a Bahá'í, Mrs. Newell, who died some three years ago) and Mrs. Martin Browne of Wimborne. The latter first heard of the Faith through the Get Together Group when 'Abdu'l-Bahá (youth) took part in a Brains Trust.

A weekly class has been arranged at the Haviland Road Toc H room, Boscombe.

**EDINBURGH.** Through the medium of the Journal the Edinburgh friends wish to place on record their expression of gratitude for the work done by the Persian friends who have had to leave Edinburgh, namely Dr. Mostakhimi, Manucher Derakshani, Lily and Iraj Ayman.

## 'The Lord of Hosts'

*Script by Hasan Balyuzi*

It is expected that this script will be available for use early next year. It is suggested that the presentation of the script could form part of the Centenary Celebrations and application for use of it by Communities should be made to the Secretary of the Centenary Committee, Louis Ross-Enfield, 32 Inverness Avenue, Blackley, Manchester, 9.

## National Fund

Cheques for contributions to the National Fund should be made payable to *The N.S.A. of the Bahá'ís.*