

BAHÁ'Í JOURNAL

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'BEHOLD ME STANDING BEFORE YOUR FACE'

'When a man turns his face to God he finds sunshine everywhere.' These beautiful words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá are the first in 'Paris Talks' and really contain the essence of the spiritual teachings needed for our daily life. Like the first of the 'Hidden Words,' 'O Son of Spirit! My first counsel is this: Possess a pure, kindly and radiant heart, that thine may be a sovereignty ancient, imperishable and everlasting,' they concern our whole attitude to life, to God and to one another. And like the fifth 'Hidden Word' they tell us to turn first to God, so that His blessings may reach us. 'O Son of Being! Love Me, that I may love thee. If thou lovest Me not, My love can in no wise reach thee. Know this, O servant.'

When we meet with trials and difficulties, when our fellow-men seem perverse or tiresome and lacking in understanding, when our material affairs go awry, if we can still turn to God, He will still pour the warmth and light of sunshine in our hearts. When we meet with success, loving friends, unexpected joys, 'The best way to thank God is to love one another.'

We must strive to rise above the gloom that encompasses the world and to do as 'Abdu'l-Bahá bids us: 'Lift up your hearts above the present and look with eyes of faith into the future.' While East and West try to solve the world's problems by joining 'to worship stars of faded splendour,' and turning 'in prayer to darkened horizons,' we must show in our daily lives our sense of security within the Bahá'í community. When others see the joy of Bahá'í fellowship they will want to share our happiness. But if we allow our worries to cloud our inner joy, who will know that Bahá'u'lláh, has brought us new life?

'Abdu'l-Bahá told the friends in London, 'Believers must show their belief in their daily lives, so that the world might see the light shining in their faces.' If we can keep that light and spirit which shone and grew when we were gathered at Summer School, how quickly the British Isles would become illumined! By constantly turning to Bahá'u'lláh in prayer and praise and by finding our joy in fellowship with the friends and service to the Cause, we can, indeed, 'radiate Divine Light' . . . and 'illuminate the world' by words, action and life, and people will

find our lives 'like a flame, warming all with whom it comes in contact.'

'With hearts set aglow by the fire of the love of God and spirits refreshed by the food of the heavenly spirit you must go forth as the disciples nineteen hundred years ago, quickening the hearts of men by the call of glad-tidings, the light of God in your faces, severed from everything save God. Therefore, order your lives in accordance with the first principle of the divine teaching, which is love. Service to humanity is service to God. Let the love and light of the kingdom radiate through you until all who look upon you shall be illumined by its reflection. Be as stars, brilliant and sparkling, in the loftiness of their heavenly station. Do you appreciate the day in which you live?

This is the century of the Blessed Perfection!
This is the cycle of the light of His Beauty!
This is the consummate day of all the prophets!
(Abdu'l-Bahá).

NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY

CENTENARY PUBLICATION

The American National Assembly produced on the occasion of the Centenary of the Martyrdom of the Báb at the request of the Guardian a booklet entitled *The Bahá'í Faith, 1844-1950: Information Statistical and Comparative*. They have sent us fifty copies of this booklet as a gift, and each Local Assembly is being supplied with one copy. Some of the remainder are available to those who are building a private Bahá'í library, at the price of 2s. 6d. each. The proceeds of these sales will go to the National Fund. Those wanting copies should write to the Secretary of the National Assembly, and the first orders opened after November 26th will be filled. Please send money with the order to 49 Sandbourne Avenue, London, S.W.19.

Consolidation Committee Secretary

Please note that all correspondence addressed to the Consolidation Committee should be sent to its new secretary: Hugh McKinley, 122 Tooting Bec Road, London, S.W.17.

ABSTRACT OF AN ADDRESS

by George Townshend

(We reprint below a summary of an address given by George Townshend to the Society for the Study of Religions. This summary, written by Mr. Townshend himself, first appeared in RELIGIONS, the interesting Journal of the Society.)

Among all the constructive movements of our time the Bahá'í Faith stands alone, unique in the dignity of its origin, in the completeness of its range and in the balance of its elements. It is a social cause, seeking the betterment of all humanity; but it is also and pre-eminently a spiritual faith. It brings to bear on the problems of our time the wisdom of God and the revelation of His will. It is not so much a new religion as religion renewed, and its desire is not that men should change their religion but that religion should change them.

It stands in the succession of the great world faiths, denying none, confirming and elucidating all, and bringing all to their final goal. It arose in the East.

Its Herald was the Báb who declared His prophethood in Shiraz, Persia, in the year 1844, and announced the approach of One mightier than Himself in nine years' time. Its Author was Bahá'u'lláh Whose ministry extended from 1853-1892 and Whose public declaration was made in Baghdad in 1863. The Expounder of the Faith was 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Who passed away in 1921.

Its purpose and its teachings are universal. Its aim is the collective salvation and prosperity of all mankind, and the unification of the whole body of the nations. Proscription and persecution in Persia and Turkey have helped to spread the knowledge of the Faith throughout the globe.

It unites in its service the special aptitudes both of the East and the West. It combines the mystical with the practical; the logical and scientific with the religious; the individual and the spiritual with the collective and institutional.

While it comes up out of the distant past and bears witness to the continuity and oneness of human history, yet it is the essence of true modernity and its particular message is measured to the matured ability and the complex needs of this present age.

It stands for hope, for confidence, for achievement. It acclaims this Age as a new cycle of human power ordained and promised by God from of old but demanding for the mastery of its problems a fuller compliance with the Decrees of God than mankind has hitherto been willing to concede.

As a proof of its power and as an earnest of coming triumph it shows before the sight of all the vision of a divinely given Bahá'í World-Order which now in one hundred countries rises in peace and simplicity and effectiveness amidst the dissolving wreckage of an unbelieving and irresponsive world.

The present Guardian of the Cause, preserving the integrity of the teachings and the unity of the body of believers, is Shoghi Effendi, grandson of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

Among the major Teachings of the Faith are historically, that this Epoch is the promised Day of the Lord, the 'Day of Judgement and of Wrath,' the 'coming of the Kingdom of God'; ethically, that the leading concept of the time is the Oneness of Mankind, and man's conduct must be attuned thereto; collectively, that the ordained objective of humanity is the attainment of a true civilisation embracing all nations and peoples of the planet.

VISITORS

We are delighted to have with us Professor Zeine of Beyrouth University, who is scarcely a visitor, since he is in Britain for a sabbatical year's study and will rank as a member of the British Bahá'í Community during that period. Until communication between Beyrouth and Haifa was interrupted, Professor Zeine edited for the Guardian the *Haifa Newsletter*.

The National Assembly was very happy to meet Mr. Noonoo, of Iran, who reported on the tour of the old and new Communities in the British Isles which he is making by direction of the Guardian. Mr. Noonoo is spending several months in Britain.

We welcomed this month also Dr. Ettehadieh, who was in London for a few days on his way home to Persia after completing his medical studies in the United States; and Miss Muqaddam, who has come to London for medical treatment.

Overseas Schoolchildren

The National Assembly has appointed a new Committee with the following terms of reference: '(1) To advise wardens of overseas schoolchildren when asked to. (2) To produce a manual of guidance for new wardens or for old ones who wish it. (3) To discuss and make recommendations to the N.S.A. regarding the Bahá'í education of schoolchildren from overseas.' Its members are Habib Hazari, Connie Langdon-Davies, John Mitchell, Isobel Slade. It is concerned with those schoolchildren from overseas for whom the National Assembly has accepted some measure of responsibility.

John Robarts' Tour

Lotfullah Hakim is collecting for the National Assembly photographs of John Robarts' tour, made at the end of the Six Year Plan. Will anyone who has a suitable photograph kindly let Dr. Hakim have a copy? Please write on the back of the photograph when and where it was taken, by whom, and the names of those in the photograph and send it to Dr. L. Hakim, c/o John Craven, 15 Riddings Road, Timperley, Cheshire.

'AFRICA NEWS'

(We reprint below issue No. 1 of AFRICA NEWS, the bulletin of the Africa Committee, which summarises progress so far made with the Africa project.)

WHAT AND WHY

By asking the American and Persian Bahá'í Communities to help the British believers with their Africa project, the Guardian has instituted a new kind of international campaign. For the first time, three Bahá'í national Communities will be working jointly on a Bahá'í teaching project—four when the Egyptian project in Africa is included. New problems of international Bahá'í organisation will have to be solved and new techniques of co-operation evolved. New ties will bind more closely the participating Communities.

The Africa Committee of the British National Assembly considers it can contribute to the smooth evolution of these techniques by providing a flow of information about the progress of the project and about decisions that will direct its course. To this end its National Assembly has permitted it to issue this bulletin, which will appear at irregular intervals when there is something to communicate. The bulletin will also keep pioneers in Africa informed of what is being done, what is planned and what has been achieved. It will constitute a means of general communication between this Committee and pioneers in Africa.

We will gladly consider for inclusion suitable items from co-operating committees overseas and we look forward to publishing before long news of intending pioneers from America and Persia.

INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION

We are very happy to co-operate with the Persian Pioneering Committee, who have already been instructed by their National Assembly to help Persian pioneers wishing to go to Africa. Mr. Aziz Yazdi is their Liaison Officer.

PIONEERS

We hope that the first two pioneers, Philip Hainsworth and Hassan Sabri, will leave for Africa in January. Passages are being provisionally booked for them—necessary because of the long waiting list for berths on ships sailing for Africa. Philip is going as agent for a textile firm owned by two Bahá'ís and will seek other agencies. Hassan has been told by the Guardian to seek a job in Africa and hopes to find one in the motor trade so that he may use his high qualifications in motor engineering.

The Committee is also in touch with several other prospective pioneers, some of whom are already seeking African jobs. These include a family in Persia, and the Pioneering Committee there tells us that others are eager to go.

TEACHING CENTRES

The following have been chosen as goal countries of the British Two Year Plan. Work is to be centred in the towns named.

GOLD COAST: Akkra
TANGANYIKA: Dar es Salaam
UGANDA: Kampala

In the course of the work opportunities may arise to foster contacts in African countries outside the Two Year Plan. We hope to take advantage of such opportunities so far as resources permit; for example, teachers visiting countries of the Plan may be able also to visit Kenya or Nigeria where there are Bahá'ís already.

AUTHORITIES

The British National Assembly has placed before the government authorities in each of the three chosen territories our intention to introduce the Bahá'í Faith into their country. We have asked for guidance on obtaining entry permits for Bahá'í pioneers, both from Britain and overseas. Such permits are required before anyone can reside in a British African dependency and the answers of the governments to our enquiry are eagerly awaited. Pioneers who procure an African job will no doubt find they can obtain an entry permit to do the job without mentioning teaching the Faith as part of the purpose of their sojourn.

LITERATURE

Bahá'í pamphlets, consisting mostly of extracts from the Holy Writings, have been translated into *Swahili*—the most widely used East African language, *Hausa*—a widely used West African language, and *Chinyanja*—spoken in Nyasaland. The ones in Swahili and Chinyanja have already been published.

One of the goals of the British Two Year Plan is publication in three further African languages. To date *Luganda*—the language of the important Buganda tribe in Uganda, and *Twi*—one of the three chief languages of the Gold Coast, have been chosen. We intend to have as many of the pamphlets as possible ready by April 21st, 1951.

We are starting now to search for suitable translators, who will not be missionaries, by whom most translations are made. Each future translation will be checked by a second expert. Publication will be undertaken by the Bahá'í Publishing Trust with advice from the Africa Committee. In spite of current printing delays in Britain, it is thought a printer has been found who can make a good job of printing in African languages and who will take no more than two months or so to complete production of a 5,000 word pamphlet.

THE HOME FRONT

A PROGRAMME FOR THE FUTURE

Consolidation news in September gave a report of progress during the past four months since Convention. This month we present a short survey of a programme for the future—sponsored by the N.S.A. and offering to every member of the community visions of opportunities for using teaching abilities of which many may not be aware.

This Home Front Campaign will be first presented to us all in an explanatory synopsis to be read at Feasts and sent to all isolated believers. Following this, six broadsheets will be issued at intervals, containing suggestions culled from many sources, about methods successfully used in six aspects of individual teaching work under these titles:

1. Personal contact.
2. Use of literature.
3. Firesides.
4. Development of love, unity and fellowship.
5. Deepening in the Cause and Covenant.
6. Bahá'í consultation.

This programme in no way seeks to interfere with the use of individual initiative in teaching work—indeed it will serve to prove that the Cause of God can be widely extended in this country by every single member of our community, not least by the prayers of those unable to undertake a physically active part. Its aim is to provide inspiration and knowledge for us all—to assist us to carry out a duty we are all pledged to do, and help us to spread the Faith in these islands on a wider scale than has been possible before, owing to the limited number of believers.

'Teach ye the Cause of God, O people of Bahá, for God hath prescribed unto everyone the duty of proclaiming His message, and regardeth it as the most meritorious of all deeds.'

EXPANSION

More declarations have made the total twenty-six since Convention:

Brighton 1
Glasgow 2
Liverpool 2

The 'Home Front' campaign should soon step up this grand progress.

CONSOLIDATION

IRA SNACE and BRIGITTE HASSELBLATT of London are entering this great band of stalwarts; Ira is going to Sheffield and Brigitte to Bournemouth. IRAJ IMAN is now in Edinburgh, IRAJ POOSTCHI has settled near Newcastle and is a member of that Community. HABIB HAZARI from Sheffield and DR. SAMANDARI from Belfast have settled in London to pursue their studies. R. H. BACKWELL has gone to Leeds. DR. HAKIM has gone on a residential teaching project for a few months to Manchester.

CONSOLIDATION COMMITTEE

For Meditation

O My servants! Were ye to discover the hidden, the shoreless oceans of My incorruptible wealth, ye would, of a certainty, esteem as nothing the world, nay, the entire creation. Let the flame of search burn with such fierceness within your hearts as to enable you to attain your supreme and most exalted goal—the station at which ye can draw nigh unto, and be united with, your Best-Beloved. BAHÁ'U'LLAH

'THE CARAVAN'

It has come to the notice of the National Assembly that Ahmad Sohrab's organisation, 'The Caravan,' is becoming active in England. All friends should immediately advise the National Assembly should they come across it anywhere. Ahmad Sohrab is a violator, though at one time 'Abdu'l-Bahá's secretary, and he now opposes the Guardian. He has financial backing from America with which he launched the Caravan, using Bahá'í principles.

The Guardian wrote about members of the New History Society, from which the Caravan sprung; 'He believes that people such as . . . have no real idea of what the New History Society stands for, and can therefore be taught the Faith, and converted to it, by the right handling. All the friends must do in such cases is to make sure that the person in question is sincere and grasps the Will and Testament. There are, of course, some individuals in whom the subversive spirit of Sohrab has taken root, and these should be carefully guarded against, but they are more the exception than the rule.'

Correction

We regret that it was incorrectly stated in *Bahá'í Journal* No. 81 for September that Robert Sloan was the first believer in Northern Ireland. This should have read 'first . . . believer from Belfast.' The first believer from Northern Ireland was Stella Cairns of Portrush.

SUMMER SCHOOL, 1951

We are glad to announce that it has been found possible to book Thwaite Hall, Cottingham, nr. Hull, Yorks, for Summer School again. Next year's school will be from August 18th—September 1st.

Additions to the Community

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

Joan Field, Edinburgh
John Deacon, Belfast
Jalil Ardekani (Youth from Iran), London.
Constance Haughton, Brighton

Changes of Address

Nottingham Secretary: Mrs. Keery, 11 Park Ave., Woodthorpe, Nottingham.

Oxford Secretary: Ian Semple, Pembroke College, Oxford.

Stockport Secretary: Miss E. B. Yool, 55 Councillor Lane, Cheadle, Cheshire.