

BAHÁ'Í JOURNAL

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THE MESSAGE OF RIDVÁN

"The Divine Springtime is come, O Most Exalted Pen, for the Festival of the All-Merciful is fast approaching. Bestir thyself, and magnify, before the entire creation, the name of God, and celebrate His praise in such wise that all created things may be regenerated and made new. Speak, and hold not thy peace. The day star of blissfulness shineth above the horizon of Our name, the Blissful, inasmuch as the kingdom of the name of God hath been adorned with the ornament of the name of thy Lord, the Creator of the heavens. Arise before the nations of the earth, and arm thyself with the power of the Most Great Name, and be not of those who tarry. . . .

"This is the Day whereon naught can be seen except the splendours of the Light that shineth from the face of Thy Lord, the Gracious, the Most Bountiful. Verily, We have caused every soul to expire by virtue of our irresistible and all-subduing sovereignty. We have, then, called into being a new creation, as a token of our grace unto men. I am, verily, the All-Bountiful the Ancient of Days. . . .

"Arise, and proclaim unto the entire creation the tidings that He Who is the All-Merciful hath directed His steps towards the Ridván and entered it. Guide, then the people unto the garden of delight which God hath made the throne of His Paradise. We have chosen thee to be our most mighty Trumpet, whose blast is to signalise the resurrection of all mankind. . . .

"Attract the hearts of men, through the call of Him the one alone Beloved. Say: This is the Voice of God, if ye do but hearken. This is the Day Spring of the Revelation of God, did ye but know it. This is the Dawning-Place of the Cause of God, were ye to recognise it. This is the Source of the commandment of God, did ye but judge it fairly. This is the manifest and

hidden Secret; would that ye might perceive it. O peoples of the world! Cast away, in My name that transcendeth all other names, the things ye possess, and immerse yourselves in this Ocean in whose depths lay hidden the pearls of wisdom and of utterance, an ocean that surgeth in My name, the All-Merciful. Thus instructeth you He with Whom is the Mother Book.

"Rejoice with exceeding gladness, O people of Baha, as ye call to remembrance the Day of supreme felicity, the Day whereon the Tongue of the Ancient of Days hath spoken, as He departed from His House, proceeding to the Spot from which He shed upon the whole of creation the splendours of His name, the All-Merciful. God is Our witness. Were we to reveal the hidden secrets of that Day, all they that dwell on earth and in the heavens would swoon away and die, except such as will be preserved by God, the Almighty, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.

"Such is the inebriating effect of the words of God upon Him Who is the Revealer of His undoubted proofs, that His Pen can move no longer. With these words He concludeth His Tablet: 'No God is there but Me, the Most Exalted, the Most Powerful, the Most Excellent, the All-Knowing'."

Bahá'u'lláh.

In Memoriam

"With the joyful tidings of light I hail thee: rejoice! To the court of holiness I summon thee; abide therein that thou mayest live in peace for evermore."

Brian Stevenson, of London. February 24th, 1945.

CONVENTION.

As already advised, Convention will be held in London on Saturday/Sunday, April 28th/29th. The sessions each day will be as follows:

10.0 a.m. to 12.30 p.m.
2.0 p.m. to 4.0 p.m.
4.45 p.m. to 6.30 p.m.

The election of the N.S.A. will take place at 5.0 p.m. on the Saturday. The Nineteenth-Day Feast of Jamál will be celebrated at 7 p.m. on the Saturday and the Feast of the 9th Day of Ridván at 7 p.m. on the Sunday.

Bahá'í Pamphlets.

It has on several occasions been suggested that we need some fresh small literature. This may or may not be true, but it is thought that a list of those which are already available may be helpful to refresh our memories. If anyone thinks that there is a definite need of a pamphlet or leaflet on quite different lines from any we have, the Publishing Trust would be glad to have suggestions, though publication will, of course, as always, depend on the paper and printing situation. Pamphlets and leaflets now available are:

The Bahá'í Faith (green pamphlet), 1d. There are only a few of these left.

Some Bahá'í Principles, 1d. A very brief outline, with the addresses of the Bradford, London, Manchester and Torquay centres on the back.

Progressive Revelation, 2d. A brief statement which explains the station of the Manifestations and the relation of the Bahá'í Faith to other religions.

Bahá'í Teachings on Life after Death, by Florence Pinchon, 2d. See separate announcement in this issue.

Economics as a Social Creation, by Horace Holley, 1d. An explanation that the economic problem is fundamentally a spiritual one.

Bahá'u'lláh, 6d. A useful booklet for those interested in the story of the Central Figure of the Bahá'í Faith; it includes extracts from His Writings.

The following are in preparation:

The Bahá'í Faith, 1d. A new general pamphlet to replace the green pamphlet when stocks are exhausted.

The Message of Bahá'u'lláh (probably 6d.). A further modified version of "Bahá'u'lláh and His Message" intended as an introductory booklet for those wanting to read more than a 1d. pamphlet but less than a complete book.

Annual Teaching Conference.

The Conference was held as usual in January in Manchester and, as always, a good crowd of friends took part. The spirit of such Bahá'í gatherings is a good indication of the state of development of the community at any particular time, and the Teaching Conference this year certainly did show a change. The discussion was more constructive and the suggestions made more practical and above all those present were much more noticeably conscious of the responsibility of each individual one of us to teach the Cause and thereby to forward the work of the community as a whole. So often in the past we have taken the opposite view and have talked grandly about what the community should do without considering at all clearly how each believer had to play his separate part. But added to this demand for individual effort, there was, too, a feeling that we need closer unity with each other, more warmth and real mutual understanding, so that all our separate efforts are harmoniously fused in the work of the community.

Many interesting suggestions were made, some possible now, some not practicable now but possible at a later stage.

It was suggested, for instance, that we ought to make more use, in preparing ourselves to teach, of the Guardian's interpretations of present events, as given in his various writings. It was felt that they give an understanding which is very much needed during these times. The Postal Study Course Committee have been asked to bear this suggestion in mind in planning their courses and to make sure that use is made of the Guardian's writings.

Again it was thought that posters giving quotations from the Bahá'í Writings exhibited on hoardings was a simple and useful way of calling attention to the Faith. Unfortunately, to do this on an effective scale and for a sufficiently long period of time to make an impression would cost far more money than we can at present afford. This is, however, an idea to keep in mind for the time when we have a bigger community and consequently larger funds.

Many people were convinced of the help that can be obtained from holding a Bahá'í exhibition in an empty shop. This is one of the simplest ways of making the Faith known to a very large number of people in a town where there is a community or a pioneer believer to follow up afterwards. The N.S.A. is very willing to help in promoting such exhibitions and it is suggested that any pioneers who feel an exhibition in their town would be of value should make enquiries about shops, costs, etc., and then write the N.S.A. about it. Material suitable for exhibiting has been prepared for a committee and is now ready. There is, however, a great deal

of work involved both in the preliminary preparation and in the attendance at such an exhibition, and most pioneers would need at any rate one or two visiting Bahá'ís to help them. It is therefore desirable to compile a list of people who could either frequently or even occasionally travel for such a purpose, and friends who can do this work are asked to advise the N.S.A.

NEWS.

Mrs. Rideout, of Amesbury, has been presenting the Bahá'í point of view to the B.B.C. Last year they asked her to serve on their panel of 5,000 people who listen and report on the various religious broadcasts and, as she says, "I was outspoken as possible in my criticisms and put the Bahá'í point of view whenever possible." This year they have formed a much smaller panel of about 200 people, and Mrs. Rideout has again been asked to serve. She has been sending in weekly reports on the religious broadcasts for over two months now, and nearly always includes a quotation or a statement by Bahá'u'lláh or 'Abdu'l-Bahá. For a long time also she has been begging the B.B.C. to allow a Bahá'í speaker to broadcast. Mrs. Rideout is doing some very valuable work, from which the Faith in this country will reap a great deal of benefit as time goes on.

Miss Ada Williams, of the Manchester community, who works for Metropolitan Vickers, entered for a speaking competition run by their Debating Society. Her talk, which was given before about 100 people, was on "The Need for Unity between Science and Religion." She spoke from the Bahá'í viewpoint and ended with a quotation from 'Abdu'l-Bahá. She was awarded the second prize and has been asked to speak to the society again.

Cpl. Norman Smith, of the U.S. Army, now stationed in this country, spent a week's leave travelling the country visiting Bahá'ís. We asked him to describe his journey for the Journal, and give his description below:

Praise be to God that you are Bahá'ís. For if there were no Bahá'ís in England, the writer's trip would not have been possible. It was his ardent desire upon leaving America, to visit the Bahá'í friends in whatever land he might be stationed. The route was mapped out in order to further the Six Year Plan most effectively.

The first wonderful visit was with Mrs. Hill and Mrs. Rideout, of Amesbury. The next day a few precious minutes with Miss Grace Challis, of Broadstone, preceded a splendid visit with the friends in Bournemouth. An unusually cold night accompanied with snow was in very sharp

contrast to the warm Bahá'í welcome of the Torquay friends.

Such matters as sleeping, eating and train schedules were of little concern to this travelling Bahá'í, as the friends and other travellers were very kind and helpful in such matters.

Travelling northward, I spent a few hours with the friends in Cheltenham, and was sorry not to have been able to call on anyone in Birmingham.

The Teaching Conference in Manchester assured the writer of the successful completion of the goal set by the Guardian. The gracious privilege of participating in the consultation made him conscious of the fact Martha Root emphasized on her return from a teaching trip around the world—that a Bahá'í is a citizen of the world.

A wonderful trip to Bradford and a fine meeting in Northampton climaxed an eventful journey. The writer humbly thanks you dear friends for having made it possible for him to travel "on earth as it is in heaven."

An article on the Bahá'í Faith appeared in the issue of "Cavalcade" dated March 17th, entitled "Persian Faith of Unity."

New Year greetings were received amongst others from friends in Sydney, N.S.W., and Auckland, New Zealand, and from the National Assemblies of Persia and Australia.

Help in Publicity Work.

Amongst the suggestions put forward by the press officer, which have been adopted, is a plan to reprint periodically from New World Order suitable articles about different aspects of the Faith and to send them to people in prominent positions, such as members of parliament, etc., who are considered likely to be responsive to the Bahá'í Teachings. This means the compilation of an extensive mailing list, and all the friends are asked to help by suggesting suitable names, together with addresses where possible. This help is urgently needed.

New Pamphlet.

"Bahá'í Teachings on Life after Death," by Florence Pinchon, price 2d. This pamphlet gives a fairly comprehensive outline of these Teachings and should be most useful for enquirers who want to know how the Bahá'ís regard life after death, reincarnation, spiritualism, etc. If given to enquirers who know nothing about the Faith, it is recommended that a more general pamphlet should be given at the same time.

News of the Friends in France.

David Hofman recently made a trip to the Continent with Ensa and was able to meet some of the friends in Paris. He saw seven of them; amongst others, Miss Sanderson, Mrs. Scott, Mme. Hess and Mr. Kennedy. They were all well, though cold owing to the complete lack of fuel, and without many other necessities. They have been through severe difficulties. All were questioned by the Gestapo after the Germans arrived in Paris, but all except one were left alone afterwards. The Germans tried to confiscate all their books, but fortunately they were able to point out that the flat of the secretary, Mr. Kennedy, had been destroyed by a bomb and books with it. In that way they were able to save some books which were stored in another place. The community lost four members during the war: Mrs. Kennedy died, Mlle. Alcan was killed in an air-raid; Mrs. Stannard died of cancer in November, 1944; and Mme. Montefiore was taken to a concentration camp and has not been heard of since. Other friends left Paris and have not returned. In spite of all their difficulties, however, those who remained, though at one time reduced to three, have held a meeting on the first Sunday of every month in Miss Sanderson's flat throughout the period of the German occupation.

We are glad indeed to know that these friends are safe and to get in touch with them again. It was possible to send a small parcel of food and soap over by a traveller going to Paris and we hope to get other similar opportunities of showing our sympathy.

Free communication having also been re-established with Switzerland, we have been in touch again with Mrs. Lynch, of the International Bahá'í Bureau in Geneva. Ours was the first letter she received from the outside world, though she had received some Haifa Newsletters and some copies of the Australian Quarterly, which took nearly a year to reach her. She reports that the friends in Switzerland have kept going during the time they were cut off from the rest of the world, but that last year, owing to the general difficulties, they could not hold their summer school.

We also hear that Miss Jack, the well-known pioneer in Bulgaria, who is eighty years old, has returned to Sofia from a village where she lived after her home in Sofia was bombed. She and all the Sofia believers, with the exception of one, have survived and are now trying to resume their teaching activities.

The Indian community held their Summer School last year in Karachi during October.

Friends came from Quetta, Surat, Poona, Bombay, Hyderabad (Sind), Bareilly and Lahore, as well as the local Karachi believers, making in all about fifty. They studied especially the History of the Faith, the book of the Aqdas and the Bayán, and the Bahá'í Administration. During the school also they held four public meetings to present the Faith, having as chairmen such prominent people as two ex-mayors of Karachi and the Director of Public Instruction for the province of Sind. We congratulate them on holding such a successful summer school.

The Australian friends have held two successful winter schools, one near Sydney and one near Adelaide. Also the believers in New Zealand have held their fifth summer school and report continued improvement and progress each time.

We just hear that they have a new community in Australia, at Caringbah, a village about 18 miles from Sydney, where they expect to elect an assembly in April.

Birth of Children.

It has been decided that the birth of a child to Bahá'í parents may be announced in the Journal if the parents wish it. Therefore any parent who desires an announcement made should notify the secretary of the N.S.A.

New Believers.

We are pleased to welcome Mrs. J. Craven, Mr. S. Husdan and Mr. J. S. Harper, all of the Manchester Community, Mrs. G. Saunders, Amersham, Bucks., and Mr. R. J. Stevens, Bournemouth, as registered believers.

"Whoso ariseth to teach Our Cause must needs detach himself from all earthly things, and regard, at all times, the triumph of our Faith as his supreme objective. This hath, verily, been decreed in the Guarded Tablet. And when he determineth to leave his home, for the sake of the Cause of his Lord, let him put his whole trust in God, as the best provision for his journey, and array himself with the robe of virtue. Thus hath it been decreed by God, the Almighty, the All-Praised.

"If he be kindled with the fire of His love, if he foregoeth all created things, the words he uttereth shall set on fire them that hear him. Verily, Thy Lord is the Omniscient, the All-Informed. Happy is the man that hath heard Our voice, and answered Our call. He, in truth, is of them that shall be brought nigh unto Us."

—From *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*.

Extracts of a letter received from the Guardian, dated March 27th.

He fully realizes the many handicaps the English Baha'is are labouring under, and appreciates all the more deeply their perseverance and devotion, shown in such activities as the National Centenary in London and the local exhibitions and meetings held elsewhere, as well as the successful Summer School, the various printing undertakings and the renewed efforts to establish new centers and strengthen older ones. In this connection he would like you to please convey to all pioneers the expression of his loving appreciation of this historic service they have arisen to render the Faith in England.

The tasks facing the believers everywhere are great, for they see only too clearly that the only permanent remedy for the many afflictions the world is suffering from, is a change of heart and a new pattern of not only thought but personal conduct. The impetus that has been given by the Manifestation of God for this Age is the sole one that can regenerate humanity, and as we Baha'is are the only ones as yet aware of this new force in the world, our obligation towards our fellow men is tremendous and inescapable. Therefore he hopes that many more of the friends there will arise to do pioneer work and help achieve the important goals set by the Six Year Plan. When once a few bold, self-sacrificing individuals have arisen to serve, their example will no doubt encourage other timid would-be pioneers to follow in their footsteps. The history of our Faith is full of records of the remarkable things achieved by really very simple, insignificant individuals, who became veritable beacons and towers of strength through having placed their trust in God, having arisen to proclaim His Message. The stamina and fortitude shown by the people at large during all these hard and bitter years of war should surely find a nobler example in the deeds of the Baha'is who are connected with the Divine Source! He urges your Assembly to do all in its power, through financial and moral assistance, to get more pioneers into the field.

Mr. Hofman has just written him about his meeting with the Paris believers, and he feels that as most of the friends there are elderly people and have suffered many privations, the British N.S.A. should keep in close touch with them and help and inspire them all it can.

.....

Regarding your question about the Cause in 'Ishqabad: We have received no good news at all concerning the friends there; on the other hand we have received no recent bad news, so presumably the situation remains as it was with the believers either dispersed or inactive and the Temple in the hands of the authorities and being used as a museum.

2.

Also concerning your question about the prayers and changing the pronouns, this cannot be done, even in the long Obligatory Prayer or the healing prayers. Either we must ignore this mere detail or say a prayer that applies to our sex or number.

.....

You may be sure that you, and your fellow-members of the N.S.A. are very often in his thoughts and prayers. He deeply appreciates your steadfast and persevering labours and hopes that the believers of England will arise to fulfil their high duties and discharge the debt they owe their countrymen through the privilege of being the followers of Baha'u'llah in these dark yet historic days.

With warmest Baha'i greetings,
Yours in His Service,
R. Rabbani.

Dear and valued co-workers:

The Six Year Plan which the English believers have conceived and are now energetically prosecuting constitutes a landmark in the history of the Faith in the British Isles. It is the first collective enterprise undertaken by them for the spread of the Faith and the consolidation of its divinely appointed institutions. The national elected representatives of the Baha'i community in those islands must watch carefully every phase in its development, provide whatever is required for its systematic and steady extension, encourage the believers to disperse, to settle, to persevere and to appeal more directly and effectively to the masses, who are waiting for this Divine Message, and on whose ultimate response the triumph of the Cause of Baha'u'llah must depend. Obstacles, however formidable, should be surmounted. Setbacks, however discouraging at first, must not, under any circumstances, cause them to deviate from the path they are so devotedly and determinedly pursuing. That glorious success may eventually crown their concerted and historic endeavours is my fervent and constant prayer at the holy Shrines. May the Beloved aid them to achieve their noble end.

Shoghi.