

# BAHÁ'Í JOURNAL

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## "ONLY BEGIN, EVERYTHING WILL BE ALL RIGHT"

**"Every sacrifice should be made, every effort should be exerted, every avenue should be explored to ensure the success of the Plan. The English believers stand identified with this Plan. The immediate destinies of the entire community depend upon it."**

*—The Guardian in his last letter to us.*

Dear Friends,

The National Spiritual Assembly have been earnestly and deeply further considering the Six Year Plan, in the light of the fact that we have made a covenant with Bahá'u'lláh through the Guardian of the Faith. This is the greatest task the British believers have ever undertaken; the words of the Guardian make this doubly clear. A covenant is two sided: Bahá'u'lláh provides everything we need to fulfil our part of it, we have only to begin to discover the dynamic spiritual power that is within every one of us. If we do not make the tiny effort to turn on the switch, there is no light and we remain in darkness. So little effort brings such great results.

The Six Year Plan is dependent on the efforts of every single believer in Bahá'u'lláh for its execution. Help and guidance can be given by Assemblies and Committees but the reality of the plan is identified with the life of every believer.

The National Spiritual Assembly began by considering the pioneering possibilities of each of its members who was present, and then went on to consider the present state of the Bahá'í community in England and what could be done to assist every single Bahá'í to become so deeply confirmed in the spirit of Bahá'u'lláh that the right thing to do will become vividly apparent and manifold opportunities will appear.

First and foremost we are dependent on prayer and meditation for our spiritual well-being; without these the spirit becomes enfeebled and we detract from the sum total of the spiritual strength of the entire community. The carrying out of the Six Year Plan is the supreme test of our faith.

We all realise that the British temperament is reserved and it may not be easy at first to speak of our faith, but at the same time we must remember that England has produced some of the greatest religious and social reformers—both the spirit and the response are there as a national as well as a spiritual heritage.

It is useless to make great plans unless the foundations on which they are laid are solid. Our personal human relationship with one another, individually and in communities, must be harmonious. We can all start by making extra efforts in this direction; this means tackling one's own ego—starting from rock bottom. Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdul-Bahá have given us endless guidance in these matters.

Then the next stage is courageous action. If we are going to pioneer, is there any reason why we should not start to-day? If there are good reasons which prevent us from doing so to-day, then let us pray ardently that we may soon be able to do so, or that we may help effectively in some other way. But in any case



let us not think vaguely of pioneering next year or the year after; if we can start immediately, we must. The Six Year Plan is already nearly a Five Year Plan.

The function of the National Spiritual Assembly is to guide, help and co-ordinate the efforts of a Bahá'í community, under the inspiration of the spirit of Bahá'u'lláh. Let us then resolve to work together with renewed faith and zeal for the fulfilment of our sacred task—and **let us start to-day.**

### NEWS.

The four believers in Blackburn have been formed into a Group. They are holding regular fortnightly meetings and getting good attendance. Amongst visiting speakers have been Miss Baxter and Philip Hainsworth, also Henry Tellerman of the U.S. Army. The Group have hopes of increasing their numbers soon.

Three meetings were held recently in Liverpool, at which there was a good attendance, and the local believer, Arthur Cole, hopes to continue them regularly in the future. Mr. Sugar of Manchester has been over to help him and other speakers will also go in the future.

One meeting has been held in Coventry, at which Mrs. Ferraby spoke, and there were six non-Bahá'ís present. During October, November and December, fortnightly meetings were held in Nottingham and there was also an extra one to try out one on a different day of the week. Visiting speakers were sent for some, including Mrs. Brown, Mr. Ferraby and Mrs. Ferraby, others were held by the two believers in the neighbourhood, Mr. Nazer who lives near Mansfield and Mrs. Lacey of Ilkeston. There is definite interest in the Faith in Nottingham, but we shall not be able to get full advantage of this until we have a believer living right in the town. We also held another meeting in Ilkeston at which Mrs. Brown spoke.

The Postal Study Course Committee has already started work, the members being: Mr. H. M. Balyuzi, Miss A. E. Baxter, Mrs. D. Ferraby, Miss V. Isenthal (secretary), Mrs. L. Stevens, Mr. A. Sugar and Mr. G. Townshend. Much of the work will be done by correspondence. The first instalment has already been sent out. Quite a number have enrolled for it. Others wishing to join may still do so and will be given back instalments.

Alice Williams of Manchester was married in September and is now Mrs. Parkinson.

The next meeting of the N.S.A. will be in London on February 3rd and 4th.

Some time ago the N.S.A. started a small library, which has been used to lend books to postal enquirers who wished something larger than a pamphlet. This library is now being expanded to include a much larger range of books, with the particular aim of making available to pioneers books which they may not possess themselves. It is hoped by degrees to develop this into a very valuable central library. At the same time the N.S.A. thinks it valuable that any believers setting out to pioneer should have with them a small library of the more usual books and the Assembly will, where necessary, help any prospective pioneer to acquire them.

### The World Community of Bahá'u'lláh.

From the Haifa Newsletter we also learn that the believers in Iraq are going on vigorously with their work. They have held their fifth summer school, which was very successful, and are hoping very soon to carry out their project of a Bahá'í bookshop in Baghdád. An important feature of their work are the Women's Study Classes, at which Bahá'í women prepare themselves to do their part in the work. The Iraq authorities have recently granted permission to obtain the building materials necessary for the completion of certain details in the Hazirat-ul-Quds in Baghdád.

The believers in Egypt are also making progress. They have been working hard for the completion of the Haziratu'l Quds in Cairo and also to build up libraries in each of their four centres. Alone amongst Muslim countries, Egypt recognises the Faith as an independent religion with its own laws and institutions, and not a sect or shoot-off of Islám. This view is shared by the Muslim Authorities also and it was confirmed by yet another decision given by a Muslim court in March, 1944. The question arose over a case of inheritance between two brothers, one a Bahá'í and the other a non-Bahá'í, whose mother, a non-Bahá'í, had died. The non-Bahá'í claimed that his Bahá'í brother could not inherit from his mother, as a non-Muslim cannot inherit from a Muslim under Islamic law. The Muslim court upheld this, saying that the Bahá'í Faith is different from Islám and a "new religion." The Bahá'í community feels that this is a triumph for the Faith and confirms its independent status in Egypt.

The unity of the Bahá'í world community has been demonstrated very clearly in connection with the murder and ill-treatment of Bahá'ís in Persia, reported in the last issue of "Bahá'í Journal." We now learn that the Indian National Assembly sent vigorous cables about the matter to His Majesty the Shah, to the Prime Minister of Persia and to the Parliament, protesting against such treatment of their fellow-believers being permitted.



### **"NOT ONE WHO HAS NOT HELPED."**

The above phrase is borrowed from the latest issue of "The Bahá'í Quarterly," issued by the N.S.A. of Australia and New Zealand, from a sentence reading: "The National Assembly deeply appreciates the efforts of each and every believer in spreading the message through Australia and New Zealand. There is not one who has not helped in the great co-operative effort. . . ." The friends there must indeed have been proud to read such a statement, and for us at the other end of the world, who are pledged to the same task, the phrase surely merits thought and attention, for it contains in a couple of words the essential need for any Bahá'í community. That there should be unity of effort, that each without exception should do his part, is the basis of strength and of success in spreading the Faith.

In this first year of our Six-Year-Plan, we may do well to keep this idea in the forefront of our minds and make sure that there is not one of us who does not help, because everybody can help, there is no doubt of that. We all have different capacities, we are all placed in different circumstances. The important thing is that we use our capacities to the utmost, and that we master our circumstances rather than let them master us.

There will be many things to do in the coming vital years. The first and foremost of course, is the sending out of pioneers, settlers who can go somewhere where teaching prospects are good and live there long enough to found a community. This is the basis, the foundation, on which the rest of our efforts will be built, and it is therefore the first and most important step to be taken.

Everyone has an equal responsibility in this. Each of us ought to examine very honestly our circumstances and see if we could not somehow or other make the necessary sacrifice—and a great sacrifice it probably will be, though a great privilege too. Some will find if they face the issue squarely that they can go, and Bahá'u'lláh will surely be with them if they do. Others will regretfully realise that in spite of everything they cannot; then for these comes another question to be considered. "What can I do to help somebody else to go?" And, since the majority of pioneers must of necessity be derived from the membership of established communities, each community as a body has too to face this question. It may well be that a small community must consider the possibility of losing its assembly for a while, so that one or more of its members may leave it, but in the long run this will not matter. If this sacrifice is made so that a new community may be born, the blessing derived from it will not only be bestowed on the new community so inaugurated

but will also redound on the older community which helped the pioneer on his way, and they will soon find that they have gained strength in all ways from the effort.

As we have said, let each give according to his capacity—the largest community ought to give the biggest number of pioneers, but the effort and the sacrifice is not less when an individual member of a community, absolutely unable to move, does double duty in his local area and in his centre, for instance, to make up for a pioneer who has gone. This, too, is a part of the picture.

On the back page of this Journal we publish for the first time a tablet which Abdu'l-Bahá sent to the English believers when He was in Paris. It was found only a little while ago amongst material in the Archives. From it we can see that He expected great efforts from the believers here. We cannot disappoint him, we must not, and we shall not do so if we make a united effort and everyone does his part, in fact if "there is not one who has not helped."

### **Prayer.**

Followers of Bahá'u'lláh acknowledge His power and guidance in all affairs concerning His Faith. How do we, the Community of His Name, receive His inspiration? Surely by the exercise of prayer—communion, the interplay of the human spirit with the energising influence of the Holy Spirit. Let us not, then, neglect this most essential aspect of the spiritual life. As Bahá'ís we are supremely blessed in the range and potency of prayers revealed by Bahá'u'lláh and by the Exemplar, 'Abdu'l-Bahá. In any emergency for much needed help, nothing can be more effective than the use of the Greatest Name, Yá Bahá ul Abhá, said nine, nineteen or ninety-five times. And may we at all costs remember the daily exercise of the Obligatory Prayers, whichever of the three suits our choice. "Prayer is the heart's sincere desire"—but it is far more potent when voiced than unexpressed.

As implements in the hand of God, we all function only to the extent to which we willingly submit to His guidance. Many prayers express this and, in using them, the power of the Manifestation is made operative through us. So, in the words of part of a prayer, "Guide us always and unmistakably to whatever Thou wouldst have us to do, and that we may ever be strong and fully prepared to render instant, exact and complete obedience." On this alone rests our success in promoting the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh.

### **New Believers.**

We gladly welcome as members of the community, Mrs. C. Taylor of Manchester and Mrs. E. M. Spaul of Bournemouth.

## A MESSAGE FROM 'ABDU'L-BAHA TO THE EARLY ENGLISH BAHÁ'IS.

**Sent while he was in Paris.**

"How are the believers in London? Are they happy? Are they spreading the call of the Kingdom? Are their tongues engaged in the commemoration of God? Are they full of zeal? Do they comfort the unhappy? Do they raise the fallen? Are they kind to all the people of the world? Do they serve the Cause of Universal Peace and Goodwill amongst the nations? Do they sympathise with the unfortunate? Are they the stars of the Heaven of Bahá? Are they the waves of the most great sea? Are they the illuminating path of the travellers? Are they the bright torches of reality? When thou art returning to London convey to them my longing and greeting, for I love these friends of God. They are faithful followers of the Light, firm upon the Covenant, sincere servants of His Highness Bahá'u'lláh. They are calling the people to the Kingdom of God and I am extremely pleased with them.

They must not rest day or night but strive to illumine the children of men, and awaken souls. This is not the day of silence! This is not the day of rest! Each one of you in this day must become a crier for the Kingdom of Abhá, a herald of the glad tidings of the Supreme Concourse. Each one must be attracted and enkindled. Each one must be happy for he has heard the call of the Kingdom. This is indeed a great privilege. Its importance is not known at this time. It will become evident in the future. The apostles of Christ attained to the greatest station in life, yet they were vilified and scorned in their day: because they were followers of the humble Nazarene, they were considered as the most despised and ignorant, but now their brilliant light has flooded the whole world with knowledge and wisdom. Each one of the apostles is shining like unto a star from the horizon of Eternal Glory. Likewise, no one can adequately express the greatness of the friends of God in this Dispensation. The glorious possibilities of this station will become manifest in the future.

The friends of God must become fully informed of the Teachings. It is well to be thoroughly versed in the sciences, arts and literature, and one must be established in the Kingdom of God on a like basis. The results of physical science are limited. His holiness Christ said: "Leave thy nets. Come and I will make thee fishers of men."

The results of the Divine sciences, the guidance of God, the spiritual arts, are unlimited, and train the real man. My spirit communicates with you. It annihilates time and space.

God willing, the confirmation of the Supreme Concourse shall descend upon you uninterruptedly.

Day by day may you receive knowledge. Day by day may you draw nearer to God, until you become submerged in the sea of Divine Light. This station is the ultimate result of human life, it is the true fruit of existence. This station is the pearl of human consciousness and consummation, the shining star towards which human destiny points."

We give below part of the November "Bahá'í Newsletter received from Haifa:

"It is with great joy and satisfaction that we convey to you the happy tidings that our Beloved Guardian is in the best of health. The greatest desire and the utmost happiness of the devout and faithful believers throughout the world will forever be the news of the well-being of the Guardian.

"To-day, the first and foremost duty of every believer and every Bahá'í community is to spread the Word of God. This is the day of sowing the seed. 'The sower soweth the word.' And the 'Word' is badly needed by a world in physical distress and in spiritual agony. A blackout more intense and more blinding than any other form of darkness has enveloped the soul of man, the canker of a moral disease more mortal than any kind of bodily ailment is gnawing at his heart. How can the bearer of light sit still while his neighbour is in darkness, how can the physician refuse to administer to the needs of the sick? Would it not be utter selfishness, to say the least, to keep entirely for one's self the good that could be done to others? What would it be said of a messenger of happy tidings who kept the message for himself, of a sower who did not sow the seeds of life which were in his possession? What tremendous responsibility, what extraordinary opportunity! For one whose soul has been kindled by the love of God, who has quenched his thirst from the life-giving waters of the ocean of His grace and who desires to render thanks unto the Almighty for having invested him with such high honour, perhaps the best way of expressing his gratitude would be to become the cause of joy to another soul by leading it to the Fountain of His Love and His Mercy."

### "God Passes By."

A copy of this book, written by the Guardian specially for the Centenary, has been placed in the national lending library. It can be borrowed by believers who are not members of a community (all local assemblies have their own copies), on application to the N.S.A. Applications will be filled in order of receipt.