

BAHÁ'Í JOURNAL

Published by

NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE BAHÁ'ÍS OF THE BRITISH ISLES
1, VICTORIA STREET, LONDON, S.W.1

No. 45

BAHÁ'Í YEAR 101

MAY, 1944

THE FIRST YEAR OF THE SECOND CENTURY

Dear Friends,

The first century of the Bahá'í Era has already passed into history. To have lived in that glorious century has indeed been a great privilege. And now that we prepare to celebrate the hundredth anniversary of the Báb's momentous Declaration, we are at the portals of a century which will see the rise of a new world fashioned and moulded by the Mind and Will of Bahá'u'lláh. This historic occasion demands a fresh dedication of our lives to the service of the Cause. Let us always remember these words which the Báb addressed to the Letters of the Living—His chosen disciples—as He sent them out to take the tidings of His advent to the world—“... Beware lest, by ‘turning back,’ He may ‘change you for another people,’ who ‘shall not be your like,’ and who shall take from you the Kingdom of God.” Also let us always bear in our minds the promises of Bahá'u'lláh that whoever steps forth to serve His Cause with sincerity and single-mindedness, He will sustain him with His spirit, and shower upon him His untold blessings.

We have the supreme example of the Founders of our Faith, upon which to pattern our lives. We have the beacon light of the deeds of the martyrs and the pioneers of the century now concluded, to show us the path of service and devotion. What was possible to Mullá Husayn and Táhirih, to Martha Root and May Maxwell, is possible to all who answer the call of God with their whole being. If we bring our all in offering to the Cause, if we manifest not only amongst ourselves, but also towards all of our fellow men, that spirit of

love which is born of our love for our Creator, if we act and live in the way the Master used to describe as one soul in many bodies, we shall receive great confirmation and great blessings, and shall reap a great reward. Then we shall have rendered our measure of debt to those gone before us, who laid the foundations of the Cause in this country with diligence and perseverance, to Maryam Thornburgh-Cropper, Ethel Rosenberg, Sarah Ridgeway, Sitarih Blomfield. We shall also have done our duty towards generations unborn. And above all, we shall be found true and faithful to the Cause of the Lord of Hosts.

National Spiritual Assembly.

In Memoriam

Grant, O my Lord, that they who have ascended unto Thee may repair unto Him Who is the most exalted Companion, and abide beneath the shadow of the Tabernacle of Thy majesty and the Sanctuary of Thy glory.—Bahá'u'lláh.

Mrs. Helen Harrison, formerly of Wimborne, latterly living at Grays, Essex, passed on January 23rd, 1944.

We have just received news of the death of Shetji N. R. Vakil, for years chairman of the Indian National Assembly, who passed to the Abhá Kingdom on May 2nd, 1943. Mr. Vakil was the first Hindu to become a Bahá'í and we extend our sincere sympathy to the Indian Bahá'í community in their loss.

COMMEMORATION OF THE CENTENARY OF THE DECLARATION OF THE BAB.

The exact time of the Declaration of the Báb was two hours and eleven minutes after sunset and the Guardian has expressed the wish that the centenary of this event should be celebrated by the believers at the exact time, wherever they may be. Allowing for Double British Summer Time, this will therefore be a few minutes after midnight, varying by a minute or two in different parts of the country.

The N.S.A. therefore appeals to all the believers in the country to celebrate at the appropriate time, either by attending an organised meeting at a Bahá'í Centre, or, in the case of the pioneers in their own homes. The Declaration will be celebrated all over the world, passing from East to West following the path of the sun. Such a celebration is absolutely unique and its spiritual effect, if everyone takes part, must be tremendous.

The programme for the commemoration meeting to be held in London, at which the delegates to Convention and many other friends will be present, is being printed and will be sent to all the believers so that they may, if they wish, use a similar form of commemoration.

Nawruz, 101.

On the occasion of the opening of the new century, the N.S.A. sent cables of greeting to the Guardian, to his wife Ruhiyyih Khánum, and to all the other National Spiritual Assemblies. The following replies have been received:

From the Guardian:

"Appreciate greetings praying great victories opening century."

From Ruhiyyih Khanum:

"Deepest appreciation message Reciprocate loving greetings Happy Nawruz."

From India:

"Sincerely grateful Indian Bahá'ís heartily reciprocate your loving greetings."

From Iran:

"Bahá'ís Iran express highly appreciation gratitude May opening century attract glorious unprecedented services threshold Bahá'u'lláh."

From Iraq:

"Bahá'ís Iraq inexpressly grateful stirring encouraging message beloved friends British Isles Convey heartfelt congratulations Ridvan Dawning Second Century Bahá'í Era."

CONVENTION PROGRAMME.

Saturday, May 20th.	5.30 p.m. to 7.30 p.m.
Sunday, May 21st.	10 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. (Election of the N.S.A. at 11 a.m.) 2.30 p.m. to 4.30 p.m. 5.30 p.m. to 7.30 p.m.
Monday, May 22nd.	10 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. 2.30 p.m. to 4.30 p.m.

As believers no doubt know, all proposals must be put forward by a delegate, and for this reason complete consultation between the delegates and their communities before coming to Convention is very essential. Pioneers may also put forward proposals and recommendations through any delegate, either by direct request or by sending them beforehand to the N.S.A., who will see to it that, through the offices of the Chairman of the Convention, they are sponsored by a delegate.

CENTENARY NEWS.

The Centenary Committee is working hard on the preparations for the exhibition and the public meeting. The time of the opening of the exhibition has been fixed for May 20th at 2.30 p.m. and the ceremony will be performed by Sir Ronald Storrs. After that the exhibition will be open each day from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m.

The large public meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 23rd, at 6.30 p.m. Mrs. Basil Hall will be the chairman and aspects of the Bahá'í Faith will be presented by Mr. H. M. Balyuzi, Mr. David Hofman and Mr. W. Tudor Pole. They will be followed by several well-known people who will speak in appreciation of the Teachings and others are sending messages. A large number of invitations are being sent out to both these events.

It has been suggested to a number of Bahá'í communities in different parts of the world that we should exchange greetings cables and it is hoped to have a number of these exhibited.

We found, unfortunately, that to print the poster which won the prize in the competition would be an extremely expensive matter, as the colours were so varied. It has therefore proved necessary to use a simpler one.

Believers will probably have seen articles on the Bahá'í Faith in a number of papers round about the time of Nawruz. This was the result of our publicity agent's efforts at preliminary publicity and they must have at least made the name of the Faith known to wide numbers of people. The London Nawruz celebrations were also attended by a press photographer and it is hoped that the celebrations will be featured in *Picture Post*.

It is hoped that the Historical Survey which the National Spiritual Assembly is issuing on the occasion of the Centenary will be ready by the time this Journal is received. It will bear the title "*The Centenary of a World Faith*." This book has 64 pages and 19 photographs. It is bound in blue cloth, in one of the new types of spiral binding known as "plastic." It contains a brief history of the Faith with special reference to the progress of the Cause in this country. The price is 5/-. It will be obtainable from the Bahá'í Publishing Trust.

May we remind the believers that the Centenary Fund is still open and that they still have an opportunity to contribute to the achievement of our plans on this unique occasion. Friends will, no doubt, be interested to know the cost of some of the items of expenditure and we give a brief budget of some of the chief expenses below :

	£	s.	d.
Hire of hall for exhibition	22	5	0
Hire of hall for public meeting	4	4	0
Hire of screens for exhibition display	12	12	0
Display cards for exhibition, maps, flowers, etc. say	17	0	0
Photographs reproduced for exhibition say	70	0	0
Printing invitation cards	15	0	0
Leaflet giving programme for week say	5	0	0
Printing souvenir programme	25	0	0
Poster advertising Centenary as such	50	0	0
Poster advertising exhibition	5	0	0
Poster advertising public meeting ...	5	0	0
Bill posting say	100	0	0
Postage for various items say	10	0	0
Fee and expenses of publicity agent say	100	0	0

The big difference between costs of the different posters is explained by the Paper Control regulations. We may have as many of the poster simply announcing the Centenary as we like, but we are only allowed 10 large and 60 very small posters for the exhibition and for the meeting.

The World Community of Bahá'u'lláh.

Since their report, quoted in our last issue, we hear that four more local assemblies have been formed in India, Lahore, Panchgani, Baroda and Kolhapur. This brings the number up to sixteen, as against five only just over two years ago.

We just learn that both the Indian and the Australian believers have been able to acquire properties for a national Haziratu'l-Quds, in New Delhi and Sydney respectively. This is a great step forward in the building up of their national communities. The Australian friends hope to inaugurate their new premises at Convention.

NEWS.

Teaching meetings have been held in Nottingham and Coventry during March and it is hoped that they will be followed by others. A second meeting was held in Ilkeston in February.

The Faith has been advertised in the press in a number of provincial towns: Nottingham, Ilkeston, Northampton, Blackburn, Blackpool, Birmingham, Coventry, Leicester, Salisbury and Kettering, and we hope to start soon in Bristol and Sheffield. These advertisements produce quite a number of enquiries and are doing much to spread knowledge of the Faith. A believer in the district was also able to get an article published in the local Kettering paper.

The Bournemouth Group, having now sufficient members, has formed a local assembly.

We welcome Mrs. M. Feltham of Bournemouth as a member of the Bahá'í community.

We just learn officially that Joan Browne of Bradford was married last year and is now Mrs. Gibbings.

Summer School.

It has so far proved impossible to find suitable premises this year. Even the place we went to last year cannot have us again. We hope, however, to find somewhere suitable in the end and the friends will be advised immediately it is settled.

Prayer for Protection.

O my Lord.

Thou knowest that the people are encircled with pain and calamities and are environed with hardships and trouble. Every trial doth attack man and every dire adversity doth assail him like unto the attack of a serpent. There is no shelter and asylum for him except under the wing of Thy protection, preservation, guard and custody.

O Thou the Merciful One. O my Lord. Make Thy protection my armoury, Thy preservation my shield, humbleness before the door of Thy Oneness my guard, and Thy custody and defence my fortress and my abode. Preserve me from the suggestions of myself and my desire, and guard me from every sickness, trial, difficulty and ordeal.

Verily, Thou art the Protector, the Guardian, the Preserver, the Sufficer, and verily, Thou art the Merciful of the Most Merciful.

(Given by 'Abdu'l-Bahá to the Bahá'í students at Beirut University in 1917.)

The Administrative Order of Bahá'u'lláh (4).

The annual National Convention is not held only for the purpose of electing a new National Spiritual Assembly; it provides also an occasion for discussion and consultation regarding the affairs and the problems of the national community, between the whole body of believers, as represented by their delegates, and the National Spiritual Assembly. Delegates are apportioned to the local communities in proportion to their numerical strength, and it is through their delegates that the believers present their views, sentiments and feelings, at the Convention. Although the right of final decision rests with the National Spiritual Assembly, that body is in duty bound to give the utmost and most complete consideration to every suggestion and recommendation that comes to it from the National Convention. It is not an exaggeration to say that the degree and the quality of the consultation taking place at a Convention determines the course of the Bahá'í work for the coming year. If the Convention succeeds in releasing a spirit of earnest determination, of selfless service, of love and harmony and united effort, the incoming National Spiritual Assembly and the national community of the believers as a whole will find themselves greatly fortified in whatever they undertake to promote and serve the Cause. Further, the wise and mature counsels which the Convention may give to the incoming National Spiritual Assembly set the trend and the direction of the Bahá'í work during the following year.

Therefore it is evident that a great responsibility rests upon the delegates to a National Convention and that all the believers in a national community have to contribute towards the success of the Convention. Although the pioneers have no direct representation, they have the right to ask any delegate of one of the various communities to sponsor any proposals or recommendations they wish to put forward.

The twin institutions of Guardianship and the Universal House of Justice stand at the apex of the Bahá'í Administrative Order. They are, according to the explicit text of the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, under the direct guidance of the Founders of our Faith.

The Guardian is the spiritual head of the Cause, the sole interpreter of the Revealed Word, and the life president of the Universal House of Justice. Should he be unable to attend the deliberations of that assembly, he must appoint someone to represent him. As a member of the Universal House of Justice, the Guardian has one vote in all, but should he feel that a

measure agreed upon by that body violates the spirit of the Faith, he is in duty bound to draw the attention of his fellow-members to that fact, and ask them to reconsider their decision.

Appointing Shoghi Effendi as the first Guardian of the Cause, 'Abdu'l-Bahá writes thus, in His Will and Testament:

"O my loving friends! After the passing away of this wronged-one, it is incumbent upon the Aghsán (Branches, i.e., descendants of Bahá'u'lláh), the Afná (Twigs, i.e., the relatives of the Báb), of the Sacred Lote-Tree, the Hands (Pillars) of the Cause of God and the loved ones of the Abhá Beauty to turn unto Shoghi Effendi—the youthful branch branched out from the two hallowed and sacred Lote-Trees and the fruit grown from the union of two of the shoots of the Tree of Holiness (i.e., the union of the House of the Báb and the House of Bahá'u'lláh) as he is the sign of God, the chosen branch, the Guardian of the Cause of God, he unto whom all the Aghsán, the Afná, the Hands of the Cause of God and His loved ones must turn. He is the expounder of the words of God and after him will succeed the first-born of his lineal descendants."

But 'Abdu'l-Bahá conditions the succession of the Guardian's first-born upon his spiritual attainments. Should he not show forth the qualifications required of him, the Guardian can pass him over, and appoint another one of the Branches. Therefore the Guardian will have to appoint his successor in his life-time, and this appointment must, by secret ballot, be ratified by the nine Hands of the Cause who are in permanent attendance upon the Guardian of the Cause.

The institution of Guardianship is the guarantee of the stability and the unity of the Cause. It wards off the dangers of sectarianism.

(To be continued.)

Publishing Trust.

As well as "*The Centenary of a World Faith*" described elsewhere in this Journal, the Publishing Trust is printing a new edition of "*The Hidden Words*," both paper and cloth editions being sold out. It is hoped the new edition will be ready soon after this issue of the Journal is received. It has a thick card cover and the price will be 1/6d.

For the protection of the community, should a relative of a believer, or anyone claiming to be in some such way indirectly connected with the Faith, apply to a community or an individual believer for help, it is requested that the secretary of the N.S.A. be informed about it.