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NAWRUZ 1944 — BAHÁ'Í YEAR 101

Our grandchildren and great-grandchildren will remember this day. Even if in those far off times the learning of history no longer involves the learning of dates, the end of the first Bahá'í Century and the first day of the second one will be a point in history to be marked and remembered. The end of a century of development—in the outer world increased speed and accessibility, new sciences, vastly greater knowledge, fresh inventions, in fact a complete change and reorganisation of our material life. Moreover, in relation to the world of the spirit, this century has seen the gradual building up all over the world of little bodies of people who have a clear vision of the world that is to come.

The century is ended which saw the Báb shot at Tabriz, saw Bahá'u'lláh riding over the mountains in mid-winter on His way to exile, which witnessed the deeds of all those twenty thousand martyrs, which saw the first linking together of the East and the West in one universal faith. That glorious century with its triumphs and its sacrifices is ending, and on March 21st, 1944, another begins, a century which will be in some respects even more glorious, which will bring greater victories for the Cause of God, and which will bring ever nearer the goal for which all those noble souls in the First Century sacrificed themselves.

And so, in the midst of a confused world of slaughter and chaos, but of new ideals, new sciences and eager searching too, we stand at the beginning of the second hundred years of the Bahá'í Faith. The world, at the moment unconscious of the significance of the event, will in the course of time come to know and to understand. We have been blessed with early

knowledge and for us it is a great and joyful day and worthy to be fittingly celebrated.

Let us therefore make this Nawruz an outstanding one. Wherever we are, in communities, groups or alone, let us rejoice and be glad, and let us invite others to share our joy. A community may be able to give a large party, a lonely pioneer may invite a few friends to tea and tell them what the day means to him. Let us all rejoice and let us proclaim our joy to all who will share it with us. For in this century "these ruinous wars shall cease and the most great peace shall come."

"Do ye know in what cycle ye are created and in what age ye exist? This is the age of the Blessed Perfection and this is the time of the Greatest Name. This is the century of the Manifestation, the age of the Sun of the Horizons and the beautiful springtime of His Holiness the Eternal One.

"The earth is in motion and growth; the mountains, hills and prairies are green and pleasant; the bounty is overflowing; the mercy universal; the rain is descending from the cloud of mercy; the brilliant Sun is shining; the full moon is ornamenting the horizon of ether; the great ocean-tide is flooding every little stream; the gifts are successive; the favours consecutive; and the refreshing breeze is blowing, wafting the fragrant perfume of the blossoms. Boundless treasure is in the hand of the King of Kings. Lift the hem of thy garment in order to receive it.

"If we are not happy and joyous at this season, for what other season shall we wait and for what other time shall we look?"

"This is the time for growing; the season for joyous gathering. Take the cup of the Testament in thy hand; leap and dance with ecstasy in the triumphal procession of the Covenant. Lay your confidence in the everlasting bounty, turn to the presence of the generous God; ask assistance from the Kingdom of Abha; seek confirmation from the Supreme World; turn thy vision to the horizon of eternal wealth; and pray for help from the Source of Mercy."

(From the Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.)

Unity.

"Another unity is the spiritual unity which emanates from the breaths of the Holy Spirit. This is greater than the unity of mankind. Human unity or solidarity may be likened to the body, whereas unity from the breaths of the Holy Spirit is the spirit animating the body. This is a perfect unity. It creates such a condition in mankind that each one will make sacrifices for the other and the utmost desire will be to forfeit life and all that pertains to it in behalf of another's good. This is the unity which existed among the disciples of His Holiness Jesus Christ and bound together the prophets and holy souls of the past. It is the unity which through the influence of the divine spirit is permeating the Bahá'ís so that each offers his life for the other and strives with all sincerity to attain his good-pleasure. This is the unity which caused twenty thousand people in Persia to give their lives in love and devotion to it. It made the Báb the target of a thousand arrows and caused Bahá'u'lláh to suffer exile and imprisonment for forty years. This unity is the very spirit of the body of the world. It is impossible for the body of the world to become quickened with life without its vivication. His Holiness Jesus Christ—may my life be a sacrifice to Him!—promulgated this unity among mankind. Every soul who believed in Jesus Christ became revived and resuscitated through this spirit, attained to the zenith of eternal glory, realised the life everlasting, experienced the second birth and rose to the acme of good fortune."

—'Abdu'l-Bahá (Bahá'í World Faith, p. 258.)

Hospitality.

"Make your home a haven of rest and peace. Be hospitable, and let the doors of your house be open to the faces of friends and strangers. Welcome every guest with radiant grace and let each feel that it is his own home."

—'Abdu'l-Bahá.

NATIONAL TEACHING CONFERENCE.

The Teaching Conference this year was a particularly successful one. There have been larger numbers of the friends present at other Conferences, but what marked this one particularly was the atmosphere and the will to action which prevailed. It was suggested at the Conference itself that the National Teaching Committee's report should be followed by reports from the communities on their Teaching activities, and this gave those present first-hand information of how communities were progressing. In the second session, Mr. Norton spoke on Teaching in the coming months. A lively discussion followed, in which the need for being always prepared to seize opportunities for Teaching was stressed. Emphasis was laid on the individual's responsibility in the matter, with suggestions also as to how assemblies can help the individual believers, especially the pioneers.

On Sunday, attention was given to the Centenary plans, and there was much discussion on how to link these with Teaching work.

It may be considered one of the best Teaching Conferences we have had. As one friend said afterwards, "Even if we only came together and didn't say anything much, it would do us all good." And we did say a great deal that was of value, too.

As usual the Manchester friends were generous in their entertainment, and provided several lavish meals at the Centre. Manchester hospitality has become proverbial among Bahá'ís.

New London Centre.

The London community and the office of the N.S.A. are now established in their new home, and visitors are invited to come and see the new premises. Though unfortunately still in a basement, they are larger and lighter and in a much more prominent position than the old ones, and we hope, amongst other things, to get the benefit of increased publicity, as many more people pass every day. Bahá'í visitors wishing to be admitted at a time when nobody is there, can have the door opened by the housekeeper if they show their Bahá'í registration card. They will not be admitted without it. We must take this precaution as there has been more than one burglary in the building, and the housekeeper would not undertake the responsibility unless the Bahá'ís could be suitably identified.

The telephone is now installed and the number is: Abbey 5047.

CENTENARY PLANS.

Out of the first nebulous ideas, the National Centenary celebrations have now taken a definite shape.

For the National Exhibition in London, we have booked the Alliance Hall, Caxton Street, Westminster. This is a modern hall, light and clean, seating normally about 140 people, although we do not expect to make use of the full seating capacity, as space will be taken up by tables with exhibits. These are to show the origin and early history of the Faith in its Heroic period, and we shall also link the Faith with the present age, both by demonstrating the extent to which it has spread to all corners of the earth and its achievements, such as building the Temples, publication of literature and the partial establishment of the Administrative Order, and by quotations from noted speakers and writers of to-day, side by side with their prophetic counterpart from the Writings of the Founders of the Faith. Much of this display will consist of photographs, maps and literature.

This exhibition is to be open to the public for one week, the first three days of which will be busy ones, since Convention will be held in London at the same time. However, the Alliance Hall is only a few minutes away from the new London Centre and duties can be shared among all those present.

On the third evening will come the climax of the celebrations, so far as the Bahá'ís are concerned, when we hold the anniversary meeting, at two hours and eleven minutes after sunset. The following evening we are holding a big public meeting, as requested by the Guardian, at Denison House, near Victoria Station. This is a bigger hall, with additional seating capacity in the gallery, and the National Assembly are sending invitations to a number of prominent people, some of whom will be asked to give an address, together with Bahá'í speakers.

For the remainder of the week we shall provide different entertainments during the evenings at the Alliance Hall, such as musical items, a short narrative drama about the history of the Faith, and a film show on Palestine.

To prepare for the celebrations and to make them known as widely as possible, a publicity expert has been engaged, who will devote himself to getting articles, letters, etc., about the Faith accepted in the Press. This advance publicity is already beginning and believers have been asked to co-operate in getting the full benefit from it.

As announced in an earlier issue of the Journal, a poster competition was also organised and pupils of many art schools were invited to compete. The number of entries was

disappointing, but the prize-winning one, done by a boy of fifteen, shows a great deal of imagination and will be printed.

BAHA'I PUBLISHING TRUST.

The Publishing Trust has been given permission to import £19 worth of books a year, and the first year's quota from America has now arrived. The supplies are very limited, so that it may not be possible to fill all orders. Orders will be dealt with as they are received after the publication of this number of the Journal, until the supply is exhausted. Books available are:

Epistle to the Son of the Wolf (Shoghi Effendi's translation)	7/6
Kitáb-i-Iqán	12/6
Prayers and Meditations	10/-
The Advent of Divine Justice	3/9
The Promised Day is Come	3/9
Bahá'í World Faith (The American successor to "Bahá'í Scriptures") ...	7/6
Selected Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and Shoghi Effendi (Three volumes, each containing a sample of the Writings of one of these)	1/3 per set of three
World Faith of Bahá'u'lláh (A summary in leaflet form, about the size of the New World Order leaflet) ...	1d.

The Publishing Trust has had printed a leaflet "Bahá'í Principles," suitable for giving to people who might not read through a larger pamphlet. It is also suitable for enclosing in letters. These leaflets are available at ½d. each.

A new pamphlet has also been printed setting forth the Bahá'í Teachings on "Progressive Revelation." At this time, when many people accept the Bahá'í Principles, it is often necessary to stress the Bahá'í Teachings on the Oneness of Religion and Progressive Manifestation in order to awaken interest in the Faith. This pamphlet deals in a simple manner with these Teachings. It does not attempt to give a comprehensive outline of the Faith. The price of these pamphlets is 2d. each.

As more than one person has had a hand in compiling the pamphlet, it is being published under the fictitious name of "John Graham." There is not, of course, a Bahá'í of that name in this country.

New Believers.

We welcome with pleasure Mrs. M. James and Miss W. Richens, of London, and Mr. D. Faux, who accepted the Cause in London but left two days afterwards to live at Painswick, Gloucestershire. Also Miss Carol Jarrett of the U.S.A., now living in Bristol.

CONVENTION, 1944.

In accordance with the wish of the Guardian, Convention this year will be held at the time of the Centenary. It will therefore commence in the afternoon of Saturday, May 20th, and continue throughout Sunday and Monday, culminating in the commemoration meeting to be held on Monday evening at two hours and eleven minutes after sunset, at which, no doubt, all delegates and other friends will be present. Detailed programme will be given in the next issue of the Journal.

Miss Joan Wilkinson has resigned from the secretaryship of the Bradford Spiritual Assembly and Mrs. Marion Burgess Norton has been elected in her place.

Legal Powers of the N.S.A.

The statement has in the past been made that, under its Articles of Association as a private company, the N.S.A. is able to act as executor of a will, if a believer wishes to appoint it. Consultation with a solicitor and with an expert on Company Law has shown that this is not so, and that its powers do not cover this function. Should any believer have appointed the N.S.A. in this way, they are therefore advised to have their will altered.

Pamphlets.

The Assembly reminds the believers of the number of small pamphlets about the Faith which are available, and urges everyone always to carry some about with them, so that no opportunity to give information about the Faith may be missed. Supplies of pamphlets can be obtained from local assemblies in the case of communities, or from the Bahá'í Publishing Trust. Pioneers are also reminded that for local teaching work, such as fireside meetings, they can be supplied with pamphlets free if they wish on application to the N.S.A.

Lost Photograph.

At the Summer School at Cudham in 1938, Mr. Balyuzi took a snap of Lady Blomfield, Mrs. Scaramucci, Miss Gamble and Miss Yandell sitting together. He lent the negative to one of the friends, who has not returned it. He would be very glad to have it back, please. Alternatively, he would be glad if anyone possessing a print would lend it to him for re-copying, as his own copies were destroyed by bombing, and the picture is of great interest.

The Beloved of God.

"The spiritual love of God maketh man pure and holy and clotheth him with the garment of virtue and purity. And when man attacheth his heart wholly to God and becometh related to the Blessed Perfection, the divine bounty will dawn. This love is not physical, nay, rather, it is absolutely spiritual.

The souls whose consciences are enlightened through the light of the love of God, they are like unto shining lights and resemble stars of holiness in the heaven of purity.

The real and great love is the love of God. That is holy above the imaginations and thoughts of men.

The beloved of God must each be the essence of purity and holiness; so may they be known by their purity, freedom and meekness in every land; they may drink from the eternal chalice of the love of God, enjoy its ecstasy, and through meeting the Beauty of Abhá, they should be joyful, active, aglow with zeal and wonderful. This is the station of the sincere. This is the quality of those who are firm. This is the illumination of the faces of those who are near.

Therefore, O ye friends of God, ye must in perfect purity attain spiritual unity and agreement to a degree that ye may express one spirit and one life.

In this condition physical bodies play no part; the command and authority are in the hand of the spirit. When the spirit becometh all inclusive, the spiritual union shall be attained. Night and day endeavour to attain perfect harmony; be thoughtful concerning your own spiritual developments and close your eyes to the shortcomings of one another.

By good deeds, pure lives, humility and meekness be a lesson for others."

The Encompassing Spirit.

"Verily, I say unto thee that the gifts of thy Lord are encircling thee in a similar way as the spirit encircles the body at the beginning of the amalgamation of the elements and natures in the womb; the power of the spirit begins then to appear in the body gradually and successively according to the preparation and capacity to receive that everlasting abundance."
(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, quoted in "Bahá'í World Faith.")

NEWS.

Torquay, having once more a membership of nine, has been reconstituted as an Assembly.

A public meeting was held in Ilkeston on Sunday, November 28th, at which Mr. Norton was the speaker. In spite of posters and advertisements, the attendance was not very large, as the date happened to clash with two other big meetings in the town. Through the meeting, however, several prominent people in the town have been interested, and the local newspaper has given a long article about the Faith and also a review of the meeting. Another meeting is being held on February 20th.

Mr. Nazar was invited to speak at the Nottingham Adult School on February 3rd, and Mr. Ferraby spoke to the Hampstead branch on January 16th. Both these invitations seem to have been a result of our advertisement in "One and All," the organ of the National Adult Schools Union.

London held an interesting meeting on Saturday, February 12th. They hired the Courtroom in Caxton Hall and invited representatives of six other religions to come and speak together with a Bahá'í for ten minutes each, on the subject of Race Amity. A Jew, a Buddhist, a Christian, a Moslem and a Theosophist all accepted the invitation, but it proved impossible to get a Taoist, as had been hoped. The meeting was announced by invitation cards, public posters and an advertisement in the "New Statesman." In all, about one hundred people attended the meeting and the room was full. Several of the speakers were entertained to lunch first and about sixty people came back to the Bahá'í Centre for tea and discussion afterwards. London feels they had a very successful day.

Torquay hold a social gathering one evening a week at their Centre especially for young people. They have quite a good attendance and hope this will form the nucleus of a youth group.

The World Community of Bahá'u'lláh.

We have just received a copy of the Bahá'í News Letter from India, which tells of the teaching efforts there. The believers there are making wonderful efforts and sacrifices and the Faith is making great progress. Two years ago they had five spiritual assemblies, now (News Letter dated July, 1943) they have twelve and they aim to establish one in every principal city of India. Many people are teaching in fresh places and in some cases whole

families are moving in order to pioneer. They reported also the success of their Summer School in 1942 and their plans to have an even better one in October, 1943. They are hoping soon to have a permanent building for their Summer School and to hold continual courses for training believers to teach both in India and the neighbouring countries.

The Australian believers are also making much progress and the Guardian has recently sent them a gift of £3,000 towards the purchase of a building in Sydney to act as the National headquarters. Previously all National business had to be transacted from the secretary's home. A number of believers are moving to new districts to do pioneer work and others are also travelling about teaching. They have held both a Summer and a Winter School and a separate Summer School was also held in New Zealand. They have been able to give several broadcast talks about the Faith, and hope to give some more at the time of the Centenary.

We have received letters of greeting from the Iranian National Spiritual Assembly, and from Youth Groups in Iran and in New Zealand.

National Teaching Committee.

Due to the large amount of work which falls on those still free to do it, the National Teaching Committee has lately found great difficulty in meeting. The N.S.A. has consequently decided for the rest of the Bahá'í year itself to deal with the very important matter of teaching. Assemblies and pioneers are therefore asked in future to send their reports to the secretary of the N.S.A. Though we shall not for the moment write under the heading of National Teaching Committee therefore, the Journal will continue to print the serial on the Administrative Order and to report all teaching news.

For Pioneers.

It has been suggested that the pioneers in particular would find sharing their efforts and experiences with each other of great help and encouragement. We are therefore planning to start a Pioneers' Corner and to print in this contributions from the pioneers themselves. We ask all the pioneers to help others, and themselves too, by supporting this. Please send in reports of your teaching experiences—it does not matter whether they brought any immediate success. One seldom sees the result at once when one sows a seed. Beside, if you have an idea, even if it does not work for you, it may be very successful when somebody else tries it in

slightly different conditions. And to read that others are trying hard too encourages everyone to go on and to keep on trying.

The Administrative Order of Bahá'u'lláh (3).

The local and national spiritual assemblies have full jurisdiction over all Bahá'í affairs within their own defined spheres. Their decisions are, however, always subject to revision by the higher authority in the scale of administration. A believer can appeal from the decisions of a local assembly to the national assembly, and from those of the latter to the Guardian and the Universal House of Justice. It must also be noted that no Bahá'í assembly can exercise authority over the spiritual lives of individuals. For example, no assembly can force an individual to say his daily prayers, or to observe the fast.

Furthermore, no Bahá'í institution can adopt articles of Faith and impose ceremonials and rituals. The basis of Bahá'í belief is most categorically stated by the Founders of the Faith, and it is not in any way subject to modification.

In the future all the assemblies will be known by their proper title, "the House of Justice," which is given to them by Bahá'u'lláh. The National Spiritual Assembly was created as an institution in the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

The following quotations from our Memorandum and Articles of Association suffice to show the relations existing between the assemblies and the individuals:

"The objects for which the National Spiritual Assembly is established are:—

"Sharing the ideals and assisting the efforts of fellow Bahá'ís to establish, uphold and promote the spiritual, educational and humanitarian teachings of human brotherhood, radiant faith, exalted character and selfless love revealed in the lives and utterances of all the Prophets and Messengers of God, Founders of the world's revealed religions, and given renewed creative energy and universal application to the conditions of this age in the life and utterances of Bahá'u'lláh, to administer the affairs of the faith of Bahá'u'lláh for the benefit of the Bahá'ís of the British Isles according to the principles of Bahá'í affiliation and administration created and established by Bahá'u'lláh, defined and explained by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and amplified and applied by Shoghi Effendi and his duly constituted successor and

successors under the provision of the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá."

* * * *

"To represent the Bahá'ís of the British Isles in all their co-operative and spiritual activities with the Bahá'ís of other lands and constitute the sole electoral body of the British Isles in the formation of the Universal House of Justice provided for in the sacred writings of the Bahá'í Faith. Above all to seek to attain that station of unity in devotion to the revelation of Bahá'u'lláh which will attract the confirmations of the Holy Spirit and enable the National Spiritual Assembly to serve the founding of the Most Great Peace. In all its deliberation and action the National Spiritual Assembly shall have constantly before it as divine guide and standard the utterance of Bahá'u'lláh:

'It behoveth them (i.e. Spiritual Assemblies) to be the trusted ones of the Merciful among men and to consider themselves as the guardians appointed of God for all that dwell on earth.

'It is incumbent upon them to take counsel together and to have regard for the interests of the servants of God, for His sake, even as they regard their own interests, and to choose that which is meet and seemly.'

"Among the most outstanding and sacred duties incumbent upon those who have been called upon to initiate, direct and co-ordinate the affairs of the Faith as members of local Spiritual Assemblies or the National Spiritual Assembly are:

'To win by every means in their power the confidence and affection of those whom it is their privilege to serve; to investigate and acquaint themselves with the considered views, the prevailing sentiments and the personal convictions of those whose welfare it is their solemn obligation to promote, to purge their deliberations and the general conduct of their affairs of self-contained aloofness, the suspicion of secrecy, the stifling atmosphere of dictatorial assertiveness and of every word and deed that may savour of partiality, self-centredness and prejudice: and while retaining the sacred right of final decision in their hands, to invite discussion, ventilate grievances, welcome advice, and foster the sense of inter-dependence and co-partnership, of understanding and mutual confidence between themselves and all other Bahá'ís.'