



BAHÁ'Í JOURNAL

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August 1974

ON LOCAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES

The following excerpts were taken from a letter dated 30 July 1972 from the Universal House of Justice to a National Assembly:

"... Local Spiritual Assemblies are at the present newly-born institutions, struggling for the most part to establish themselves both in the Bahá'í community and in the world. They are as yet only embryos of the majestic institution ordained by Bahá'u'lláh in His Writings. This is also true of National Spiritual Assemblies.

What we find expounded in the writings of our Faith is the lofty station local Spiritual Assemblies must attain in their gradual and at times painful development. In encouraging these Assemblies to attain this aim, there is no harm in the National Spiritual Assembly mentioning certain minimum requirements from time to time, provided it is clear that non-attainment of such standards, which by their very nature must be continuously revised with changing conditions, do not justify the withdrawal of recognition from any weak Assemblies. It would not be profitable therefore for the Universal House of Justice to lay down universal minimum standards for properly-functioning local Spiritual Assemblies, as these must necessarily differ from country to country, and even from district to district within the same country, in the process of the evolution of these Assemblies into Houses of Justice, as envisaged by Bahá'u'lláh.

Among the more salient objectives to be attained by the local Spiritual Assembly in its process of development to full maturity are to act as a loving shepherd to the Bahá'í flock, promote unity and concord among the friends, direct the teaching work, protect the Cause of God, arrange for Feasts, Anniversaries and regular meetings of the community, familiarise the Bahá'ís with its plans, invite the community to offer its recommendations, promote the welfare of youth and children, and participate, as circumstances permit, in humanitarian activities. In its relationship to the individual believer, the Assembly should continuously invite and encourage him to study the Faith, to deliver its glorious message, to live in accordance with its teachings, to contribute freely and regularly to the Fund, to participate in community activities, and to seek refuge in the Assembly for advice and help, when needed.

In its own meetings it must endeavour to develop skill in the difficult but highly rewarding art of Bahá'í

consultation, a process which will require great self-discipline on the part of all members and complete reliance on the power of Bahá'u'lláh. It should hold regular meetings and ensure that all its members are currently informed of the activities of the Assembly, that its Secretary carries out his duties, and its Treasurer holds and disburses the funds of the Faith to its satisfaction, keeping proper accounts and issuing receipts for all contributions. Many Assemblies find that some of their activities such as teaching, observance of Feasts and Anniversaries, solution of personal problems, and other duties are best dealt with by committees appointed by the Assembly and responsible to it.

In all cases submitted for its consideration the Assembly must uphold the standard of justice in delivering its verdict, and in all its dealings with the community and the outside world it must strive to evince the qualities of leadership. The following quotation from a letter of the Guardian summarises in simple terms the immediate goal every Assembly should set for itself in its efforts to pursue the exalted standard of perfection inculcated in our writings:

"The first quality for leadership both among individuals and Assemblies is the capacity to use the energy and competence that exists in the rank and file of its followers. Otherwise the more competent members of the group will go off at a tangent and try to find elsewhere a field of work where they could use their energy.

"Shoghi Effendi hopes that the Assemblies will do their utmost in planning such teaching activities that every single soul will be kept busy."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada, dated 30 August, 1930)

In the compilation of texts we sent to all National Spiritual Assemblies in August 1970, and in the By-Laws of a local Spiritual Assembly, you will find all the objectives local Spiritual Assemblies must aim at achieving in their process of growth and development. We recommend that you re-study these documents carefully and discuss this highly important problem with the Counsellors of your zone who will be only too glad to help you encourage the development of local Spiritual Assemblies in your country. . ."

THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE

GOALS OF THE FIVE YEAR PLAN

The completion of the new arrangements for delineation of Districts and counties in the new plan of civil administration of the United Kingdom enables us to clarify the goal of increasing the number of localities, about which you enquire in your letter.

Since the area of jurisdiction of Local Spiritual Assemblies is to be the same as that of District Councils it is possible, as you point out, to establish only one Local Spiritual Assembly in each District. This means that the number of localities in the United Kingdom is likewise limited to the number of Districts, since groups and isolated believers cannot exist in the area of jurisdiction of a Local Spiritual Assembly. When the new administrative arrangements were proposed it was realised that the number of localities which you had achieved under the old system would be greatly reduced, and your goal is therefore to open every District in the United Kingdom and eventually, of course, to establish a Local Spiritual Assembly in each one. We are very happy to note the very vigorous action which you have taken to nominate seventy-seven Districts in which Local Spiritual Assemblies must be established and we hope that you will make a great effort even to exceed this goal.

As to the acquisition of four Ḥaẓīratu'l-Quds, "one in each of the four parts of the United Kingdom", the goal is to acquire four more than you now have.

The British Convention this year seems to have stimulated the enthusiasm of the friends for the accomplishment of the Five Year Plan and we sincerely hope that the redoubtable British Bahá'í community will be able to achieve all its goals well before the end of that Plan and undertake further assignments as well as rendering assistance to other communities. Your National Spiritual Assembly should never lose sight of the unfolding destiny which was the subject of some of the Guardian's most inspiring and energising letters and we hope you will take steps to see that all new believers are acquainted with this destiny which is not to be patiently waited for but actively to be achieved. It is indeed a task to be done and a clear duty laid upon the British believers.

The vigorous steps which you have taken right at the beginning of the Plan, to prosecute it are indeed heartwarming and augur well for the speedy accomplishment of all the goals. Be assured of our ardent prayers at the Sacred Threshold for divine confirmations to continually sustain and reinforce the devoted efforts of the British Bahá'í community.

30 May 1974

THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE

THIS "UNFOLDING DESTINY"

by Philip Hainsworth

Fewer than three score adult believers throughout the length and breadth of the British Isles struggled to carry aloft the torch of their Faith as the world moved inexorably into the Second World War. Notwithstanding their frailties and, by comparison with what can be done today, their puny efforts, however, the beloved Guardian greeted their smallest victory with the highest praise and encouragement, always spurring them on to greater service. One such example was his wonderful message written on the 18 February, 1940:

Dear co-workers,

I wish to reaffirm my deep sense of gratitude and admiration for the splendid manner in which the English believers are discharging their duties and responsibilities in these days of increasing peril, anxiety and stress. Their tenacity, courage, faith and noble exertions will as a magnet attract the undoubted and promised blessing of Bahá'u'lláh. They have, at a time when the basis of ordered society itself is rocking and trembling, laid an unassailable foundation for the Administrative Order of their Faith. Upon this basis the rising generation will erect a noble structure that will excite the admiration of their fellow countrymen. My prayers for them will continually be offered at the Holy Shrines.

Gratefully,

Shoghi

In 1944 however, a handful of believers met at Convention in war-torn London, adopted a Six Year Plan and cabled the Guardian asking him to set the goals, and from that moment a new word came into his messages. He began to write of the 'destiny' of the British community, and on more than twenty occasions during the remaining thirteen years of his life he reminded the believers of the relationship between the spread of the Faith and the fortunes of their fellow countrymen. This destiny, to spread their Faith throughout the British Isles, then to Africa and later to the furthest reaches of the British Commonwealth, gradually unfolded as the messages from the inspired pen of the Guardian were received, were studied and were assimilated. Yet even today, as the Universal House of Justice brings back our attention to them, they assume newer significance, as the following excerpts illustrate:

The English believers stand identified with this Plan. The immediate destinies of the entire community depend upon it...

12 August 1944

I am anxiously waiting for the news of the progress of the Six Year Plan, upon which the future orientation of the collective activities of the English believers depends, and with which the immediate destinies of their Faith are interwoven. No sacrifice is too great to ensure its success. The utmost effort, vigilance, perseverance and self-sacrifice are required to carry it to a successful conclusion...

18 December 1945

However considerable their recent achievements, they are still in the initial stage of their great unfolding mission, and are not even capable as yet of visualising the possibilities or of estimating the consequences of their present-day labours. The consummation of their present task will mark the opening of a new era in the development of their community and will signalise the inauguration of a great epoch in the history of the Faith in their land—an epoch that must witness the universal recognition of their Cause and the proclamation of its truths, its claims and tenets, to the masses of their countrymen throughout the British Isles...

12 October 1946

The successful conclusion of the Initial Phase of the first collective enterprise launched by the followers of Bahá'u'lláh in the British Isles during the first year of the second Bahá'í century constitutes a milestone of the utmost significance on the road leading the British Bahá'í community to the glorious destiny ordained for them by Divine Providence...

29 April 1948

With every forward step taken by this stalwart community in the path of service to the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh, with every signal victory achieved for the promulgation of His Faith, a new revelation of the glorious Mission which this community is privileged to undertake is unfolded before the eyes of its members and a wider vista of the future range of its operations, both at home and overseas, opens before it. With every complication that arises in the course of its unfolding Mission, with even every seeming reverse it meets with, as its destiny unfolds, a clearer understanding of the character of its stewardship to the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh is vouchsafed to its members, a greater measure of His sustaining grace is poured forth from on high, a more compelling evidence of His all-conquering power is evinced, and a more majestic assertion of His mysterious purpose is demonstrated...

12 June 1952

The Plan on which the British Bahá'í Community has embarked, unique in its significance, unprecedented in its scope, so vast in its potentialities, so meritorious in its objectives, so challenging in its features, will, if consummated, at the appointed time, open a further vista, before the eyes of its victorious prosecutors, of such transcendent glory as none of them can as yet even dimly imagine. The path leading to the discovery of this brilliant yet at present distant goal, at which a triumphant community will be enabled to catch a glimpse of its ultimate destiny, revealed in the plenitude of its splendour, is long, steep and thorny. The prizes to be won by those who must tread this path, in the years immediately ahead, are not to be easily secured. The challenge will be prolonged and severe. . .

25 June 1953

This June letter, following immediately after the successful completion of the Two-Year Plan, was one of the weightiest and most moving letters written to the British Community by the beloved Guardian. We all eagerly await the publication of all the

messages of the Guardian to the British Isles so that we may savour to the full the loving guidance which poured out in abundance throughout the whole of Shoghi Effendi's ministry, and the foregoing quotations only serve to whet our appetite. The closing paragraph of this same letter must move us today, as it did that handful of believers of twenty-one years ago when they received it, to reflect with awe and gratitude upon the privilege which is ours to be called to serve Him in these 'days of world-encompassing trials':

That they may, guided and assisted by the vigilance, the wisdom and devotion of their elected national representatives, forge ahead with undiminished vigour, with exemplary fidelity, and with inflexible determination, along the path of their high destiny, overcome every obstacle that stands in their way, achieve signal success in the course of the opening phase of this world-girdling Crusade, and crown eventually their Ten-Year Plan with a victory unexampled in the annals of the Faith in the British Isles, is my cherished hope for them and my fervent and constant prayer.

Shoghi

PIONEERS FOR FALKLAND ISLANDS

In the Five Year Plan, the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States has been given the responsibility of raising at least five groups in the Falkland Islands which would be in addition to the Local Spiritual Assembly achieved during the Nine Year Plan. However, a recent report received at the World Centre indicates that some of the pioneers are going to have difficulties remaining at their posts because, (1) the European Space Research Station is closing down its station in the Falklands and two families of pioneers will be affected by this; (2) the second of the two sources of employment in the Falklands, namely the government, is not likely to employ Americans, especially Bahá'í pioneers. The report indicates that there is a great need for a doctor and that teachers are often in demand. In view of the obstacles cited, the friends in the Falklands suggest that pioneers from the United Kingdom may have a better chance of obtaining work with the government, or positions as teachers or in the medical field.

We call upon your Assembly to assist your sister community in the United States to attain the goal of the Five Year Plan by appealing for pioneers qualified to seek the job opportunities mentioned above. Whenever you have a response to your appeal please contact directly the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and between your two Assemblies work out the details. . .

26 May 1974

THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE

PIONEER NEED IN LESOTHO

The Universal House of Justice has received a report from the Counsellors in Southern Africa drawing particular attention to the need for an early settlement of pioneers in Lesotho. The need appears mainly to be for a couple whose knowledge of the Faith is adequate to cope with the deepening of the friends. It would be highly desirable if, in addition, the couple would be experienced in maintenance and gardening, as the upkeep of the Teaching Institute and the national Ḥaḡiratu'l-Quds in Maseru is a vital function they could perform.

All the pioneer goals under the Five Year Plan are of course important, but you are requested by the Universal House of Justice to regard this assignment for Lesotho among your top priorities.

(A letter addressed by the Department of the Secretariat to the National Spiritual Assemblies of Persia, the United Kingdom and the United States: 3 June 1974)

CONTINENTAL BOARD OF COUNSELLORS IN EUROPE

To all National Spiritual Assemblies in Europe

June 1974

CONTINENTAL BAHÁ'Í FUND FOR EUROPE

We are very grateful indeed to all those National Assemblies who have kindly contributed to the Continental Fund in the past year. We always feel that such contributions are a sign that the National Assemblies support our work and find the efforts of the Counsellors and Board Members helpful. We shall appreciate it if you will all continue your financial support for our Fund and would like to suggest that it might form an item in your budget each year, along with contributions to other Bahá'í Funds outside your own community.

NSA Note: This has always formed a part of our National Budget and contributions should be made to the National Treasurer.

BURIAL LAWS

"The portions of the Bahá'í burial law which are now applicable to the western believers are:

- a) that the body must be buried and not cremated;
- b) that the body should not be transported further than one hour's journey from the place of death;
- c) the use of the Prayer for the Dead (Prayers and Meditations, CLXVII, pp. 260/61; also refer to "Synopsis and Codification of the Laws and Ordinances of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas", Section II, p. 58)".

(Extract from a letter received from the World Centre)

The House of Justice states that Spiritual Assemblies should gradually educate believers in the importance of observing these portions of the burial laws.

The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United Kingdom

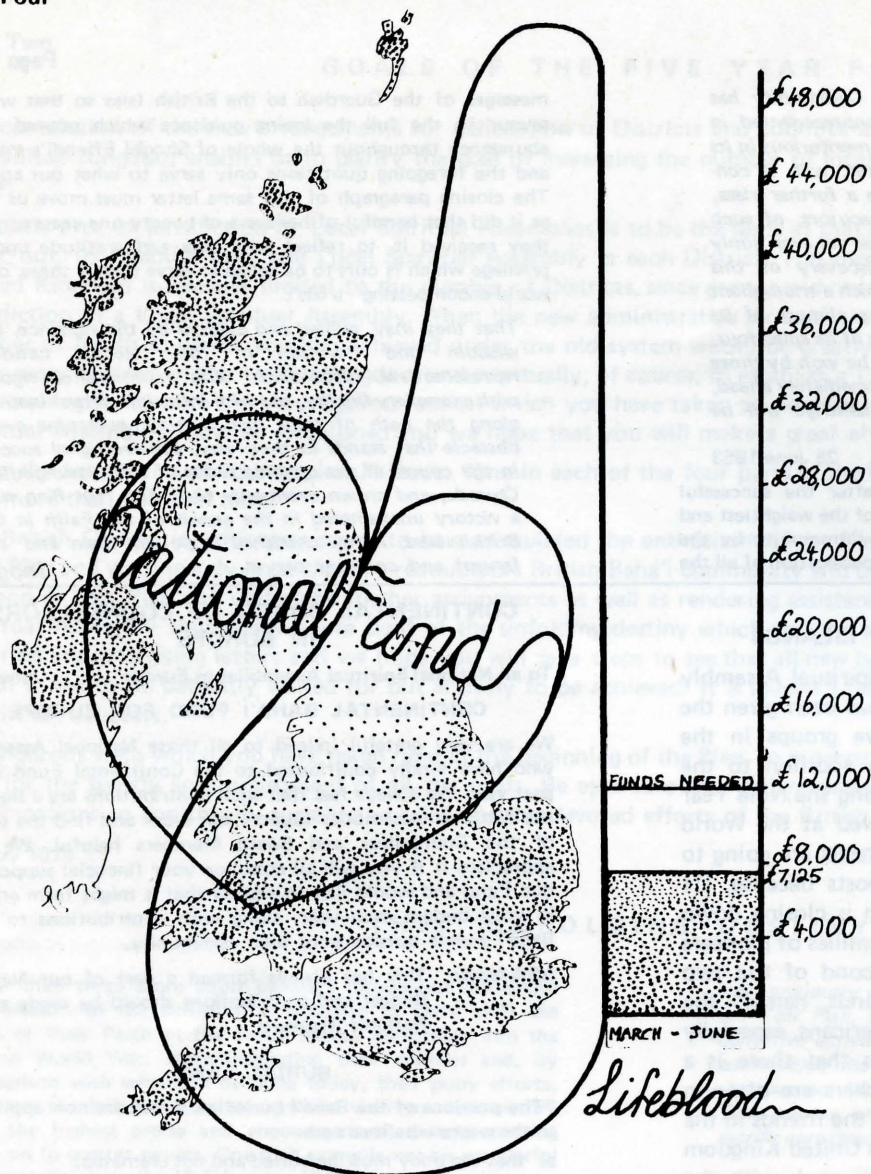
10 May 1974

Dearest Bahá'í Friends, Alláh-u-Abhá,

Thank you most sincerely for your lovely letters to our Convention and from your Convention to our National Spiritual Assembly. These letters conveyed to us such a depth of love and brotherhood, that all hearts were uplifted. We are indeed proud to share with your distinguished community that 'glorious destiny' to which the Beloved Guardian has referred. It is our prayer that we as a newly developing community may arise to meet the challenges of the future. We wish to express once again our great joy that we will be working so closely with your National Assembly in Northern Ireland during the Five-Year Plan. . .

We send loving greetings to each one of you and assure you of our prayers for your unbounded success in the Five-Year Plan.

NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE BAHÁ'ÍS
OF THE REPUBLIC OF IRELAND



**ANNUAL
BUDGET £48,000**
[21 March 1974 - 21 March 1975]

AMMOUNT RECEIVED
March ~ April £2,287
April ~ May £2,542
May ~ June £2,296
TOTAL £7,125

INTERNATIONAL NEWS



**THE HANDS OF THE CAUSE WHO REPRESENTED THE
UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE AT CONVENTIONS FOR
THE ELECTION OF NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES**

Ridván 1974

'Amatu'l-Bahá	— Burma
Ruhíyyih Khánum	— Hong Kong*
Ugo Giachery	— United Kingdom
A. A. Furútan	— Persia
Adelbert Mühlischlegel	— Germany
Jalál Kházeh	— Brazil
Paul Haney	— United States
Enoch Olinga	— Kenya
William Sears	— Japan
John A. Roberts	— Canada
H. Collis Featherstone	— Papua and New Guineá
Rahmatu'lláh Muhájir	— Australia
Abu'l-Qásim Faizi	— Turkey

* The formation at this Ridván of the National Spiritual Assemblies of Hong Kong, and South East Arabia, brings to 115 the number of national communities participating in the launching of the Five Year Plan.

**INTERNATIONAL TRAVELS OF THE HANDS OF THE
CAUSE OF GOD AT RIDVÁN 1974**

'Amatu'l-Bahá Ruhíyyih Khánum represented the Universal House of Justice at the historic election of the first National Spiritual Assembly of Hong Kong. The consolidation of the community of Hong Kong was a goal of our beloved Guardian's Ten Year Crusade and it is fitting that 'Amatu'l-Bahá should have been present to witness its establishment as a national pillar of the administrative framework of the Cause.

Ruhíyyih Khánum also attended the National Convention of Burma which was held in Daidanaw, traditionally known as " 'Abdu'l-Bahá's village."† The Faith was first established in Burma in May 1878 through the visit of Mirzá Jamál Effendi and Siyyid Mustafá Rúmi, two early teachers of the Cause who first brought the message to a number of countries in southern Asia.†† The National Spiritual Assembly of India and Burma was formed in 1923 — one of the earliest national communities — and Burma became an independent National Spiritual Assembly in 1959.

A preliminary report received from Persia indicated that the National Convention was held in an atmosphere of enthusiasm and joy. The delegates and friends in attendance pledged to provide the entire budget for the work of the Five Year Plan for Persia. After attending the Convention, the Hand of the Cause A. A. Furútan will remain in the country for some time at the

† The Bahá'í World, Vol. 1, p. 141.

†† Star of the West, Vol. 22, No. 7, October 1931, p. 208.

invitation of the National Assembly to support the teaching and consolidation work. This visit, his first to Persia since 1966, will provide an opportunity for Mr Furútan to see his old friends, and participate in the launching of the Plan in that country.

Various northern European islands were visited by the Hand of the Cause Adelbert Mühschlegel before he attended the German National Convention and, returning from the National Convention of Brazil, the Hand of the Cause Jalál Kházehe is touring Bahá'í communities of the Caribbean islands, notably the French Antilles.

In addition to attending the Japanese National Convention, Hand of the Cause William Sears is meeting with the friends in Korea and will revisit Hawaii to assist with the filming of a television series about the Faith.

The Hand of the Cause Abu'l-Qásim Faizi attended the National Convention of Turkey and a Teaching Conference there following which he has embarked upon a global journey of five months' duration which will take him to a number of countries in Latin America, to the United States, Hawaii and Canada, and to various centres in Europe.

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC: January and February were busy months in the teaching field, reports this National Spiritual Assembly. A team of teachers from France, accompanied by a local believer, visited a number of areas in the country. As a result of this seventy new believers embraced the Faith, twenty of whom reside in the goal town of Sibut where a public lecture was given. Some weeks later two native believers visited Sibut and won seventeen new adherents. With forty-three Bahá'ís now enrolled in Sibut the formation of a Spiritual Assembly there is assured!

ECUADOR: The value of the mass media in proclaiming the message is illustrated in a comment drawn from a report reviewing the progress of the Faith in Ecuador during the last five years of the Nine Year Plan:

"The need to sustain our achievements and deepen the masses led us to present radio programmes which, at first, were sporadic and then were broadcast on a regular basis. At the

present time, over 200,000 persons hear the Bahá'í programmes transmitted through five radio stations in different cities, thus covering a large part of the nation. In the mass conversion zones, the programmes are presented in Spanish and Quechua.

"It is very exciting to pass through the market place where the Indians sell their hand-woven fabrics and see them with their portable transistor radios listening to one of their favourite programmes, a Bahá'í broadcast entitled 'At the Hours of Dawn'. Letters have been received from Indians expressing gratitude and congratulations and saying, 'At last we hear the Name of Bahá'u'lláh over the radio!' This work is constant and the responsibility to maintain its present level has increased the devoted efforts of the several friends who are completely dedicated to preparing compilations and doing translation work.

"The distinguishing aspect of our radio programmes is the fact that we have transmitted the message of Bahá'u'lláh over the official national radio station with programmes of twenty or twenty-five minutes' duration every fifteen days."

HAWAIIAN ISLANDS: The Legislature of the Hawaiian Islands has approved a bill recognising Spiritual Assemblies as marriage officiants. Heretofore licences to perform marriage were granted to individuals on the same basis as to clergymen. The bill awaits the Governor's signature.

PIONEERS TO BELGIUM

- 1) The best way to get the right information is to address enquiries to the Belgian Embassy.
- 2) Some facilities are granted to students, but they would have to come before October.
- 3) For friends coming from countries in the Common Market, formalities might be easier.

We hope that these different points will be of help to you. We want to thank you warmly for the wonderful assistance you intend to give to our community and we send you our best Bahá'í greetings.

NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE BAHÁ'ÍS OF
BELGIUM

EXTRACTS FROM THE WRITINGS ON HUQÚQU'LLÁH

جاء قدم جل اسم الله العظيم مفر مايند قوله تعالى :

يا سمندر چه مقدار از نفوس كه بكمال سعى و اجتهاد شتى از رخارف جمع

ميانيد و كمال منسج و شادى را از جمع آن دارند و لكن در باطن از قلم اعلی

بدگران محول شده يعنى نصيب خود ايشان نيست ببايشود كه با جادى آن نفوس

ميرسد اعادنا الله و اياكم من هذا الخسران المبين عمرتف شد و شب و روز حجت

كشيد شده و مال هم سبب و بال كشت اكثر اموال ناس طاهر نيست اگر ناس

با ناله الله حائل باشند البته حيايت حق آن نفوس را محروم نگذارد و در حال

فصلش مراقب و رحمتش متوجه خواهد بود . انتهى

WISTON SUMMER SCHOOL CANCELLED

At the NSA meeting of 13 July it was reported that there were only eleven bookings and only one of the sixteen speakers required had accepted; of a number of people approached to be chairman of the school not one could accept. Regretfully the NSA has therefore been obliged to cancel this school.

Summer Schools have already been booked for 1975 in Leicester and Tiverton, Devon.

DEADLINE DATE FOR THE NEXT ISSUE OF THE JOURNAL:

10 September 1974

Material should be sent to the Editor,

Lois Hainsworth (Mrs)
Treen,
Allerton Park,
Leeds LS7 4ND

NOTICES

MARRIAGES

- 1 June 1974: Christine Knight to Roy Stone (of Newfoundland) in Winchester.
- 13 July 1974: Helen Mitchell (St. Andrews) to Donald Gordon (not a Bahá'í) in Coatbridge.
- 1 August 1974: Jo Goldstein to Martin Newman in Rhirvas, North Wales.

DEATHS

- 8 May 1974: Mrs Laetitia Shanks, aged 86, in Southport.

NATIONAL TEACHING COMMITTEE: TEACHING THE BLIND DEPARTMENT

Enquiries

Following a short announcement in the 'New Beacon', the journal of blind welfare, we have had five enquiries about the Faith, including three (all by telephone) from blind readers in the United Kingdom and one from a blind man in Paris. Local communities are being informed and they may be able to establish contact with some of these enquirers.

Calling all tape recording enthusiasts

Do you have recording equipment suitable for producing master tapes from which copies on tape or cassette can be made? Equally important, have you a suitable quiet room which you could make available to our volunteer readers? If so we should be delighted to hear from you.

We are hoping to establish a network of recording points of this kind to advance our plans for audio versions of Bahá'í books. We hope to use these in a variety of ways — not only for the blind.

We are not at present looking for volunteer readers, as this is the easier part of the job and will depend to some extent on the location of the recording points.

Please give technical details of the equipment in your letter. Send it to Kari-anna Christopherson, 48 Western Hill, Durham DH1 4RJ, or telephone Durham 2994.

Deepening

In the last issue we mentioned the advantages to a blind person of having a tape recorder. This should preferably be a cassette recorder for which a good selection of material is available, but for deepening purposes a reel tape recorder is just as good.

Here is a self-teaching method which we think may prove helpful. It can be used 'solo' by sighted people who can read ordinary print or by blind people who can read braille with reasonable proficiency. It can also be used by blind or illiterate people who have the services of a 'reader' for steps 1 to 4.

1. Decide what you are going to study. This may be particular subjects (for firesides for example) or passages from a

particular book. Plan ahead as far as possible to give yourself a feeling of progress.

2. If you are studying a particular subject, locate passages relevant to the subject.
3. Record the chosen passages. If possible use a room with plenty of soft surfaces and no background noise. But as the tape is only for personal use there is no need to bother too much about quality.
4. Play back the tape, stopping at anything you don't understand and try to find out what it means.
5. Listen a lot to the tape. Take your time. Listen to short passages and meditate upon them. You will find that each time you listen a new meaning or aspect is apparent to you. Repeat the sentences if you like. This is one good way of learning passages by heart.

Braille books

Extract from a letter we have just received from the National Library for the Blind:

"We have in stock two books on the Bahá'í Faith: 'The Kitáb-i-Íqán'; translated by Shoghi Effendi, 'Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era'; by J. E. Esslemont. Both of them are in good condition, as we find we have very little demand for them."

This is news to us, and we shall be doing our best to wear them out from now onwards! Will you help us by recommending them to blind friends who are members of the library?

We have now added two more books — "The Hidden Words of Bahá'u'lláh", and "The Renewal of Civilisation" by David Hoffman.

Services to Individuals

We are always happy to correspond with blind people in braille or on tape, and to send them extracts from the Writings, etc., on request. Write to Kari-anna Christopherson, 48 Western Hill, Durham DH1 4RJ or telephone Durham 2994.



A third teaching weekend for young youth was held at the home of Ted and Alicia Cardell in Great Paxton on 24/27 May; the photograph shows a group of those attending.

SOME REFLECTIONS ON THE NATURE OF BAHÁ'Í PRAYER

by Denis McEoin

Whereas the inner, spiritual meaning of prayer is universal and comprehensible to all men, the outward forms which worship take differ from religion to religion, and are often a cause of misunderstanding or confusion. Thus it is that many Bahá'ís not of an Islámic background, while deriving every possible benefit from the use of the prayers revealed by Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá may yet retain a vague sense of not being quite at home with, for example, the Obligatory Prayers. It may not, therefore, be without value for Western Bahá'ís to gain some idea of the nature and function of prayer in Islám, for it is upon an Islámic foundation that the form of prayer in the Bahá'í Faith is based; Christian concepts of prayer will be of little value in helping us understand the meaning of the outward aspect of Bahá'í worship: in many cases, in fact, such concepts may mislead us, for many of the prayers, particularly the Obligatory Prayers, have no true counterpart in Christian devotional practice. The very word 'prayer' is itself misleading in this context, for it is applied without distinction to several different forms of devotion, each of which has a different name in Arabic.

Worship as such is known in Islám as 'IBÁDAH, a word derived from a root which contains the idea of servitude and obedience. The word 'ABD means a slave or a servant, primarily of God, and its earliest meaning seems to have been that of 'one who worships'; in a sense, it can be translated 'creature', that is, literally, 'one created by God to worship and serve Him'. In the Short Obligatory Prayer, we read: "I bear witness, O my God, that Thou hast created me to know Thee and to worship Thee", while, in the 'Epistle to the Son of the Wolf' (p.84), Bahá'u'lláh, referring to the Manifestation of God as the Divine Lote-Tree, says: "God created thee for the purpose of recognizing and of serving it".

Although our whole lives are meant to be a service to God, and while all work performed in the spirit of service is accounted as worship in this Dispensation, yet the Manifestation of God reveals certain ordinances through which the relationship between man and his Creator, the servant and his Lord may be expressed both individually and collectively. In the 'Kitáb-i-Iqán', Bahá'u'lláh declares: "... in every Dispensation the law concerning prayer hath been emphasized and universally enforced" (p.25), and again "... in all Dispensations the law of prayer hath constituted a fundamental element of the Revelation of all the Prophets of God — a law the form and the manner of which hath been adapted to the varying requirements of every age" (p.25-25). The Law of Fasting is closely related to that of Prayer, and, as will be seen, the ordinance of Pilgrimage has a special relationship with it also.

Islámic Prayer

In Islám, there are three basic forms of prayer: DU'Á, ŠALÁT, and DHIKR.

DU'Á is a prayer revealed for a specific occasion or purpose, such as Tablets of Visitation, prayers for the dead, for Fasting, for marriage, or whatever. (Tablets of Visitations — ZIYARAT-NÁMIH — are a form of prayer particularly common to Shí'ah Islám, being used by pilgrims to the shrines of Imáms and Imám-Zádís; many examples of these may be found in the book 'Tufátu'z-Zá'irín' by Muḥammad Báqir al-Majlisí. The word ZIYARAT — literally 'Visitation' — corresponds to the English word 'pilgrimage', whereas the Arabic word for the pilgrimage to Mecca — ḤAJJ — has no Western equivalent.*) DU'Á also takes the form of prayers of supplication of God — the verb from which the word is derived means to call or to appeal to — and the majority of the prayers of Bahá'u'lláh are of this form. Another form, only used in Persian, commonly used by Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá, is that of the MUNAJAT, a poetical praise of God; in Persian usage, this word is often used to apply to what is, strictly speaking, DU'Á. These two forms most nearly correspond to the concept betokened by the word 'prayer'.

DHIKR may be described as supererogatory prayer. Literally meaning 'remembrance', and much used by Šúfis, it consists of the repetition of certain phrases, such as the invocation of God, or simply His Names, repeated a prescribed number of times. In Islám, it is traditionally taught that God has ninety-nine Names — the 'Most Beauteous Names' — but there is said to be another Name, the Greatest Name. This we, as Bahá'ís, believe to be the name Bahá (in various forms such as 'Alláh-u-Abhá', or Yá Bahá'u'l-Abhá), and we are particularly privileged to be able to call on God by this Name.

ŠALÁT (in Persian NAMÁZ) corresponds to what we know as the Obligatory Prayers. Confusion often arises among Westerners because they tend to think of prayer as a personal, heart-to-heart communion with God, and are perplexed by the need for prostrations, exclamations, and other regulations which must be observed in ŠALÁT. In terms of Western thinking, ŠALÁT is not, strictly speaking, prayer at all, but rather a ritual observance which must be performed according to the instructions which are given. It is not spontaneous worship: it is not intended to be. The major difference between ŠALÁT in the Bahá'í Faith and in Islám is that Bahá'u'lláh has ordained it to be private, whereas in Islám, where possible, it is performed communally.

Universal Harmony

In ŠALÁT man finds himself in harmony with the entire creation. It is explained in the Qur'án how all created things, each in its own way, worship God: "... unto God doth all in the heavens and on the earth bow down in worship, willingly or by constraint: their very shadows also at morn and even!" (13:16); "Seest thou not that all in the heavens and all on the earth adoreth God? The sun and the moon and the stars, and the mountains, and the trees, and the beasts, and many men?" (22:18); "Every creature knoweth its prayer (ŠALÁT) and its praise" (24:41) (see also 16:50, 55:5). In the 'Epistle to the Son of the Wolf', Bahá'u'lláh writes: "He ... hath given a voice unto all things that they may praise and glorify Him" (p.9).

But whereas the mineral, the vegetable, and the animal kingdoms worship (YASJADÚNA — bow down) God by constraint, man is given the freedom to choose. Yet, when he desires to worship God, he places himself under the guidance of the Manifestation of God as to the manner and words in which he should do so: "Thou hast taught Thy servants how to make mention of Thee, and revealed unto them the ways whereby they can supplicate Thee, through Thy most holy and exalted tongue, and Thy most august and precious speech" ('Prayers and Meditations', p.216). Indeed, Bahá'u'lláh has elsewhere written: "... were I to glorify Thee, O my God, so long as the glory of Thy majesty endureth and the influence of Thy sovereignty and power will last, such a glorification could never be compared with any of the praises which Thou, as a token of Thy grace, hast taught me, and wherewith Thou hast bidden me to extol Thy virtues" ('Prayers and Meditations' p.227).

Time

Through the prescribed prayer, man is enabled to enter into a harmony with the entire universe, in time and in space. This harmony takes place in time as follows: at least once during the daily rotation of the earth, man steps out of the perpetual round of material affairs, and turns his face to the Qiblih (the direction of prayer) and his mind to God: thus a continual cycle of prayer is directed, as the earth revolves, towards the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh; every nineteen days (which recent astronomical research has shown to represent a lunar sub-cycle) the believers throughout the world, again in a cycle, leave aside worldly concerns and gather together for the holding of Feasts. Once in the cycle of the movement of the earth around the sun, we call a halt to the round of eating and drinking by habit, and, regulating our bodies to the apparent movement of the sun (as it rises earlier and sets later every day), fast for a month from sunrise to sunset; at the end of the Fast, we celebrate the beginning of a new annual cycle with Naw-Rúz, the first day of spring. In the Bahá'í calendar, a period of nineteen years, that same period referred to by the Greeks as the 'Great Year', for at its end the stars appeared to return to their original places, constitutes a VAḤID (Unity). The Hebrew Sacred Calendar is likewise based on this same cycle of nineteen years. Once at least in the cycle of man's life, he leaves behind his everyday existence and travels to the Qiblih of the Bahá'í world — having so long turned his face towards that Spot, he is now come to the Place round which all creation revolves.

The Significance of the Qiblih

In terms of space, we again see this harmony: in prayer, we turn our face to the Qiblih — at old time Jerusalem, then the Kaaba in Mecca, and today the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh in the Holy Land. The implications of this act are astonishing. In the 'Kitáb-i-Aqdas', Bahá'u'lláh refers to the words of the Báb, Who declared that the Qiblih was Him Whom God shall make manifest (i.e. Bahá'u'lláh), and states that whoever turns his face towards Him has turned his face towards God, the One Who is worshipped; in that same

book, He directs the believers to turn in His direction when they pray. After the Passing of the Blessed Beauty, the Qiblih became His Shrine, the earthly resting-place of the remains of the Manifestation of God on earth. Shoghi Effendi, in a letter dated April 27 1937 to the Bahá'ís of India, wrote: "While praying it would be better to turn one's thoughts to the Manifestation as He continues, in the other world, to be our means of contact with the Almighty. We can, however, pray directly to God Himself." Bahá'u'lláh, in the 'Epistle to the Son of the Wolf', referring to Himself, says: "Set thine heart towards Him Who is the Kaaba of God. . . ."; in that same work, He quotes Imám Ja'far aṣ-Ṣádiq as saying: "... We are the Kaaba of God, and We are the Qiblih of God" (p.113) — the Manifestation of God is the true Kaaba, of which the outward Qiblih is but a symbol. Time and again, on almost every page of the writings of Bahá'u'lláh, He calls upon us to 'set thy face towards the Spot', to 'set your faces towards Him', to turn towards God', to 'set thy face towards the lights of the countenance of the Desired One', to 'set thy face towards the Most Sublime Station', to 'set now thy face towards the court of this Wronged One', and urges us to fix our gaze upon 'the Supreme Horizon', 'the Sublime Vision', 'the Horizon aglow with the light of His countenance', 'the light of certitude'. In the instructions at the beginning of the Long Obligatory Prayer, we read: "Whoso wisheth to recite this prayer, let him stand up and turn unto God".

The Manifestation of God is not only the Qiblih of this world, He is the Point of Adoration for the entire universe, for all beings: "Him Who is the Object of the adoration of the entire creation" ('Gleanings' p.200); He is the Primal Point from which all created things have been generated, round which they circle, and to which they must all, in the end, return, the 'central Orb of the universe' (Iqán p.64), the focal point of creation.

A distinction is made between turning one's face to the Qiblih and turning one's inner heart to God: an inward turning of the heart towards God through His Manifestation must precede the outward directing of oneself towards the Qiblih. In Islám, this is provided for in NIYYAT or 'intention' whereby one states one's inward intention to pray before the actual commencement of the prayer. In the 'Epistle to the Son of the Wolf', Bahá'u'lláh writes: "Set thine heart towards Him Who is the Kaaba of God . . . and raise thou thine hands with such firm conviction as shall cause the hands of all created things to be lifted up towards the heaven of the grace of God, the Lord of all worlds. Turn thou then, thy face towards Him in such wise that the faces of all beings will turn in the direction of His shining and luminous horizon, and say: . . . "The famous Persian mystic Jalálu'd-Dín Rúmí writes:

"If I have not turned the face of my heart towards Thee, then Prayer to me is not as Prayer;

if I turn my face to the Kaaba, it is for love of Thee, else have I done with Kaaba and prayer."

Bahá'u'lláh enjoins the peoples of the earth to "turn yourselves towards Him Who hath turned towards you" ('Epistle to the Son of the Wolf' p.48): we can only turn to God because He, in His love, has already turned to us, has bestowed His grace upon us unasked: "I loved thy creation, hence I created thee" states the Hidden Word, emphasizing that the beginning of all things is with God, and reminding us once more that the purpose of our creation is to worship God — to love Him because He has loved us.

An Outward Symbol of Inner Reality

Yet how wonderful it is that, when we have turned our face to the Qiblih and our inmost heart unto the Manifestation of God, we find ourselves looking within our own hearts: "Turn thy sight unto thyself" Bahá'u'lláh has written, "that thou mayest find Me standing within thee, mighty, powerful, and self-subsisting". The human heart is the repository of the Revelation of God, the dwelling-place of God Himself: "... the heart is the throne, in which the Revelation of God the All-Merciful is centred" ('Gleanings' p.185), "Earth and heaven cannot contain Me; what can alone contain Me is the heart of him that believeth in Me, and is faithful to My Cause" (Islámic Tradition quoted by Bahá'u'lláh, 'Gleanings' p.185); "Thy heart is My home; sanctify it for My descent". One is reminded of the world-view of the Middle Ages, in which the earth was conceived of as a sphere around which circled the translucent spheres of the moon, the sun, the planets, the stars, and the Primum Mobile, the largest sphere whose rotation moved the others: beyond that was God. Yet God was at the very heart of that universe, setting all things in motion through their love for Him. Is not the very movement of the universe itself a great act of worship? All things in the exterior world are but a symbol of the spiritual realities that underlie all creation; in prayer we are enabled to co-exist in both worlds simultaneously. An understanding of this fact will make of the outward forms of the prayers meaningful spiritual acts and not mere motions or gestures.

*It should be noted that Pilgrimage to the Holy Land and to the Holy Places in Turkey, 'Irâq, and Persia constitute 'Ziyárat' and are not the Bahá'í equivalent of the Muslim Hajj to Mecca. There are two Hajj ceremonies in the Bahá'í Faith, to the House of Bahá'u'lláh in Baghdad and the House of the Báb in Shíráz, but in both cases it is necessary to perform the specific acts and recite the Tablets specified for the Hajj, otherwise this too is counted as Ziyárat. The performance of Hajj to either of these two Holy Places has been made obligatory for men, but women are exempted.

NEWS FROM THE COMMUNITIES

TEMPLE SITE IN EDINBURGH

The LSA has gratefully accepted the most generous offer by Surgeon-Commander John More Nisbett, a member of the Edinburgh community, of a two acre plot as a temple site in Edinburgh. The site is part of an area of woodland owned by the Commander, and is set on a ridge overlooking the city. Its commanding position can be seen from the photograph. The legal procedure for transfer of ownership of the site to the LSA, which as an incorporated Assembly will be able to hold it in the name of the Faith, is now under way.

A book on Edinburgh describes the ridge as follows:—

"(There) extends, by a gentle ascent, a broad avenue of splendid beeches, ending at a gateway, now walled up. . . (the site) commanding a superb view of Edinburgh and of the opposing coasts of Fife and Lothian, and, in favourable weather, of the hills of Perthshire. At one time this estate was accounted 'the most beautiful place in Midlothian'."



View from the site showing how it overlooks the city of Edinburgh



Approaching the temple site.



John More Nisbett (left) on the temple site with the Chairman of Edinburgh LSA, Clive Collins.



"Consort with the followers of all religions. . ."

Four Bahá'ís – Bob Cheek, Melanie Attfield, Evelyn Bowman and Geoff Collins – photographed with Buddhists, Mormons and others at the Religions Fair held in Norwich.

BIRMINGHAM: The new District of Birmingham was formed by the amalgamation of Sutton Coldfield with the old City of Birmingham. This meant that the Assembly elected this Rígván was drawn from a community of about fifty Bahá'ís. Recently a project was held in Quinton, in West Birmingham, which was quite successful, with thirteen non-Bahá'ís present and Bahá'ís from Birmingham, Stafford, Worcester, Shrewsbury and Wyre Forest supporting it. There have been two declarations in the City within a month, and the friends are in good heart. Birmingham University has a Bahá'í Society at the moment but this will have to lapse unless a new student comes in September, and year-long efforts to form a Society at Aston University have also had to be suspended because there will only be two Bahá'ís there next year.

CARLISLE: In June we had the pleasure of having Don Fushe, the first Africana Bahá'í from South Africa, visit us.

On his arrival, for publicity purposes for the Faith, Radio Carlisle and Border TV were contacted and interviews were arranged, during which Don managed to name the Faith on his TV interview and talk about his exciting journey to Hawaii in order to attend a Bahá'í Youth Conference. His interview on the radio lasted for half an hour and he gave a good account of the Faith for 'all with an ear to hear'.

EDINBURGH: The National Trust for Scotland, owners of the house in Charlotte Square where 'Abdu'l-Bahá stayed during His 1913 visit to Edinburgh, are planning to turn the house into a Georgian show-house open to the public. The LSA have been in touch with the Trust, who have undertaken to include in their guide-book for the house reference to 'Abdu'l-Bahá's stay.

HOUNSLOW: The Bahá'ís of Hounslow Borough spent a very active June. On 2 June a very successful salad luncheon and auction were held at the National Centre, with £200 received for the national fund. Just one week later the Assembly sponsored a coach trip to Stratford-on-Avon. Not only did we enjoy Stratford itself, but the drive also was an enjoyable experience, complete with sweets and a Shakespeare quiz. Our very nice driver took us through Oxford on the way up and pointed out various sights of special interest, especially Balliol – where the Guardian studied. Not content to rest on our laurels,

a deepening/teaching/proclamation weekend was held at Syon Park, which is in our borough. Entitled "Rose Garden" and carrying out the theme of "In the garden of thy heart naught but the rose of love" this event succeeded in proclaiming the Faith to many people and, thanks to our speakers, Mary Hardy, Ted Cardell, and Phillip Hinton, the weekend was definitely a success.

ISLE OF MAN: A beautiful rainbow encircled the Isle of Man as the last of the teaching team boarded the steamer after a wonderful teaching weekend.

A group of fifteen Bahá'ís from many different parts of the United Kingdom set out to launch the Five Year Plan in the Isle of Man. We started with a devotional and then, armed with attractive invitation cards, the teams set out each to their appointed districts to let the Islanders know that we had arrived.

Molly Hughes had booked us into a delightful hotel with three lounges all of which were at our disposal: that we chose the bar lounge was not because of the multi-coloured liquids gleaming through a mirror, but because there were lots of chairs for visitors. Molly had also sent notices to the local papers and these proved to have excellent results. The enquirers who came through these notices proved to be genuine, serious seekers and the evening when the public came was stimulating both to the visitors and to the Bahá'ís themselves. A fireside at Molly's flat the following Wednesday went on until after midnight and the next day the last of the team boarded the 9 a.m. boat and left the island under its lovely rainbow with the feeling that Bahá'u'lláh had blessed our efforts.

LONDONDERRY: On the evenings of the 24 and 25 June, the Londonderry Assembly arranged a drawing-room concert for piano, given by Sylvia Schulman and invited about seventy people.

Although not as many came as had been hoped, this event did much to raise the standard and dignity of the Faith in the eyes of many people. Those who attended very much enjoyed and appreciated the artistry and high professional standard which Sylvia displayed. She spoke about the Bahá'í teachings between the piano pieces and afterwards several of the guests asked

searching questions. We hope that this and subsequent events of a similar nature will show the high standards of music that the Faith seeks to express and will manifest the truth of Bahá'u'lláh's words:

"We have made music a ladder by which souls may ascend to the realm on high."

NEWTON AYCLIFFE – COUNTY DURHAM: The Faith was publicly proclaimed for the first time within the new Sedgfield District Council of County Durham recently. At the Clarence Hall, Newton Aycliffe on 25 May, Philip Hainsworth addressed a public gathering of Newtonians beautifully describing the Bahá'í Faith. A wonderful spirit was experienced by those at the meeting – including several non-Bahá'ís. Lydia and Michael Blakey wish sincerely to thank the friends from Durham and Newcastle who came to support this meeting and especially the Hainsworth family for coming to get Newton Aycliffe 'off the ground'.

NORWICH: The Religions Fair which was held in Norwich on 8 June undoubtedly represented a significant innovation for this East Anglian cathedral city. In Chapel Field, a small but beautifully kept public garden in the heart of the city, members of religions and religious persuasions set up their tents or stalls and disseminated information and literature about their respective faiths. We were able to hire a marquee and Richard Morgan not only loaned the display he had made for last year's Barsham Fair, but he and his wife, Rosemary, gave a recital of songs during the Fair. Other welcome Bahá'í helpers came from Peterborough, Lowestoft, Henham, Yaxham and Twickenham.

Wide publicity had been given to the event by the organisers and the Press gave good coverage (without, however, managing to mention the Bahá'í Faith by name!). We had inserted a double-column advertisement in the local paper featuring the quotation "Consort with the followers of all religions in a spirit of friendliness and fellowship". In spite of a morning of steady rain and a chilly afternoon the Bahá'í marquee was well patronised by interested enquirers of all age groups. We hope to hear further from a number of these who were obviously deeply impressed by the universality of the message. The Chairman of the Parks and Gardens Amenities Committee visited the Fair and was outspoken in his approval of this type of 'attraction to the Gardens', asking us to request a repeat of the event; it is hoped to hold it annually. Having seen the amazing response in bad weather we can but look forward eagerly to the crowds that a fine day could bring. It is worth noting that our Cedar of Lebanon, planted to mark the centenary of the Declaration of Bahá'u'lláh, flourishes in this very garden. Thanks are certainly due to the organisers, Mr and Mrs Pete and Frankie Green (not Bahá'ís) who initiated the project in the desire for people to gain a knowledge and understanding of each other's religious beliefs.

First Bahá'í teaching effort at University of East Anglia: Geoff Collins, Stephen Thompson and Julie Wingard, the three Bahá'í students at the University, recently arranged for a fireside at the University Chaplaincy. Several enquirers attended the talk which was given by Bob Cheek, and joined in the lively discussion which followed.



The Mayor of Rochdale photographed with Bahá'ís from Bradford, Cheadle, Leeds, Preston, Oldham and Rochdale who attended the presentation.

ROCHDALE: Last year the Heywood Group had a well-supported, well-publicised Proclamation event, and now that they have been drawn within the Rochdale area, they commemorated the Martyrdom of the Báb with a very full day. It began when Bahá'ís from Leeds, Bradford, Preston, Stockport and Oldham arrived in the morning for a devotional service at 11.30 am. This was followed by a buffet lunch when contacts, including the Editor of the local paper, joined the Bahá'ís. At 2 pm a convoy of cars set out for Rochdale Town Hall, to meet the first Mayor of the new Metropolitan District, Councillor A. A. Kaufman. Mrs Lois Hainsworth, as Editor of the Bahá'í Journal, presented him with a copy of "Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era".

Among those present was a Bahá'í, Hannalore Middlebrook of Bradford, whose home town is Beilefeld which is the twin city of Rochdale, and which the Mayor had recently visited officially. The Mayor then took the Bahá'ís on a tour of the Town Hall and afterwards Alan Woodhurst of Preston was invited to play the organ in the main hall. The Mayor then invited Lois Hainsworth to sing, which was appreciated not only by the Bahá'í party, but many people who work in the Town Hall were drawn to listen. After tea in the Mayor's Parlour, the Bahá'ís took their leave, happy in the knowledge of the teaching work they had accomplished on this great Holy Day. The day closed by inviting two people they met in the Town Hall back to Heywood to an impromptu fireside, who showed a keen interest in the Faith, having read previously the weekly publicity in the local paper. Seven contacts in all participated in the day's events, and two local newspapers (Heywood and Rochdale) printed photographs and articles, giving further publicity for the Faith in the area.

SEVENOAKS: On Saturday, 15 June, Sevenoaks had the great privilege of a piano recital by Sylvia Schulman, which provided a delightful evening for about fifty Bahá'ís and non-Bahá'ís. The Group were fortunate to be allowed to hold it in the house of a non-Bahá'í, a most kind and helpful Methodist, because the Music Club piano was housed there, and this gave it a warm and intimate atmosphere which greatly enhanced the evening.

Sylvia's wonderful playing was much appreciated by the audience (mainly non-Bahá'í), and she interspersed this naturally and attractively with short and effective talks on the Faith.

The Group had previously circularised between 250 and 300 addresses with an invitation and programme, which also contained information about Sylvia and her connection with the Faith. These addresses included all Sevenoaks Music Club (some of whose members attended the recital) as well as the local M.P., the Town Mayor (a new institution!), the occupants of Knole House (Lord and Lady Sackville), the editors of the local newspapers, etc., all of whom declined most courteously for one reason or another, but wished us well!



The Bahá'í marquee at Norwich Religions Fair

There was a photograph and short account before the recital in both local papers, but only one paper printed a shortened version of the appreciation supplied by a member of Sevenoaks Music Club. We shall have to wait and see whether the seeds sown bear fruit.

The following Friday Ted Cardell came to our Fireside, and we had another stimulating evening of discussion and slides with one or two contacts present.

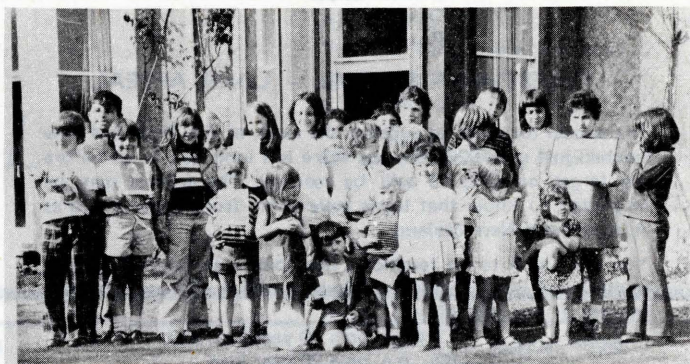
We have had four declarations since last December, two adults and two Youth, but one adult now lives in Spain and one youth is 'loaned' to Shrewsbury during term-time (our blind friend from Uganda, Francis) as he is studying there, so we are naturally anxious to find those few but elusive 'waiting souls' who will help us to form an Assembly!

SOUTHPORT: On 8 May Mrs Laetitia Shanks passed away, and was buried according to Bahá'í Law. This was the first Bahá'í funeral in Southport, and quite perplexed the undertaker who needed to pay someone to officiate! Mrs Shanks was the oldest Bahá'í in Sefton, aged 86. It was a beautiful service with readings from other sources including Bahá'í.

On 6 and 7 July Sefton Bahá'í Youth are organising a Youth Weekend. We have had the opportunity to take the service at the Southport Unitarian Church on Sunday 7 July, so it will be quite an eventful weekend, and we are hoping for great support.

TRAFFORD: On Friday 28 June, the Trafford Bahá'ís presented the local M.P., Winston Churchill Jnr., with a copy of "The Proclamation of Bahá'u'lláh" and Gloria Faizi's book on the Bahá'í Faith. He was delighted that we should think of him and showed warm appreciation. This was followed the next day by a mini-exhibition at the annual Stretford Pageant held in a beautiful local park. Despite gloomy weather forecasts, our prayers won us some lovely sunshine, and after the initial work of getting everything ready everyone relaxed, listening to some beautiful songs recorded by Fiona Dunn; then later some live music from Ted Edwards and David Brown. Over 100 people took away literature voluntarily, and several hundred people stopped to look at the exhibition material. A pleasant interchange of information took place between some charming young people from the Divine Light Mission who stayed an hour or more enjoying and contributing to a loving atmosphere. What the results of the day actually were in terms of people being attracted to the Faith we cannot tell, but the park keeper was very impressed that we were one of the few stalls to clear litter from our own patch. A lot of work and support came from the Manchester and Stockport communities, otherwise the five members of Trafford group would have found it impossible to put on the event. We are sure that such loving inter-community co-operation is the key to 'recharging the batteries' of smaller groups like ourselves. Our thanks and loving greetings to all who helped in any way.

The exhibition material — three boards 7' high x 4' wide — is available for hire to communities. We are charging what they can afford and giving the proceeds to the National Fund. Those interested should contact Mrs Margaret Grant of the Trafford Group.



Children attending the day school at Winchester

WAVENEY (SUFFOLK): We held a most successful public meeting, the first ever, in the Theatre Centre at Lowestoft on Friday 3 May.

Earlier that same day the Seals and Crofts film 'The Riding Thumb' was shown at the Technical College in Lowestoft, after which Phillip Hinton answered the students' questions about the Faith.

At the evening meeting he gave a talk entitled 'World Unity', and the film about the Temple in Panama was shown. This was followed by tea and coffee, and informal discussion. About forty people attended, over half of which were non-Bahá'ís and the Waveney Group are very grateful to the friends who supported them from Norwich.

Several very interested people were invited to an informal social evening at the home of a Bahá'í in Lowestoft the next evening, where a slide show 'Carmel, Mountain of God' was shown, and a very friendly evening was enjoyed by all.

As a result of these two evenings at least twelve people in and around Lowestoft are becoming very close to the faith, including a United Reform minister, a Spiritualist, a Quaker and a Mediator (T.M.).

A follow-up meeting is being planned for late June and the Waveney Bahá'ís will have a stall at Barsham Medieval Faire, as they did last year.

WINCHESTER: On Sunday 26 May, a very happy and successful Children's Day School was held at 'Northleigh', Winchester, when twenty-six children from the ages of two to twelve years, took part in drama, song, painting and dancing sessions, all illustrating various aspects of the Bahá'í Teachings.

Children and parents came from as far afield as Derby and Cardiff. Each child was given a photograph of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and at the end of the school — the tiny tots kissed their parents as they presented them with a flower from 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Garden'.

Our community and friends had the bounty of a visit from David Hofman who spoke on Progressive Revelation, for which we are all very grateful!

Wyn Pratley has recently been on a week's travel-teaching trip to Guernsey and in June we had the joy of a Bahá'í wedding, when Christine Knight of our community married a Canadian Bahá'í, Roy Stone.



The Bahá'í exhibit in Trafford

"BAHÁ'Í NEWS"

Communities which have news of world wide interest should send their typed contributions to:

Ted Cardell,
Manor Farm,
Great Paxton,
St. Neots. Hunts.

Where possible, these should be accompanied by glossy black and white photographs.

Bahá'í Publishing Trust

2 South Street
Oakham
Rutland



THE BOOKTRADE

INVESTMENT SCHEME – LOAN APPEAL

The appeal for loans to support the work of the Trust has now reached just over £22,200, but there is a long way to go before the target of £35,000 will be reached. The friends may be interested to know that loans have come from as far afield as Australia and New Zealand.

You may wish to be reminded that loans can be made in any multiple of £25 for fixed periods of 10 or 20 years bearing interest at the rate of:—

7½% p.a. on a 10 year loan and

8% p.a. on a 20 year loan.

The Trust acknowledges with gratitude the help given by those who contributed to a previous appeal who have extended their repayment time into the new appeal.

Application for loan forms and further information from:—

The Publishing Trust, 2 South Street, Oakham, LE15 6HY.

LIVING THE LIFE

This is the latest in the series of compilations prepared by the Universal House of Justice to be published by the Trust, and has been planned so that it may form a companion volume to "PATTERN OF BAHÁ'Í LIFE". In addition to the original compilation sent to National Assemblies on 24 November 1972, this edition contains a letter of further guidance sent by the Universal House of Justice to National Assemblies on 6 February 1973.

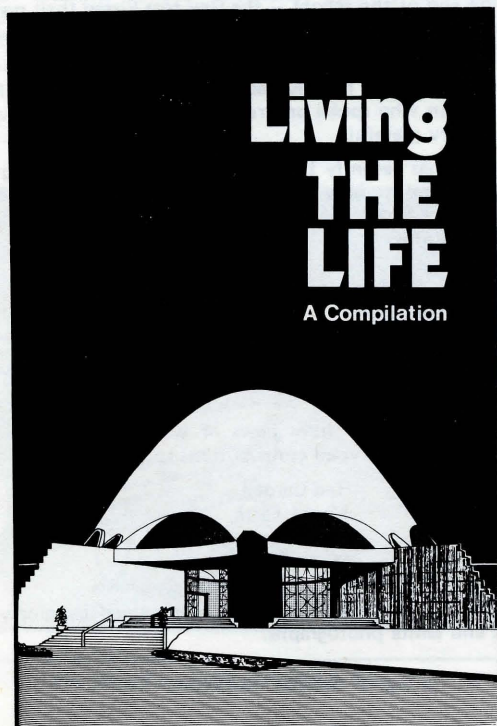
The booklet contains guidance of all kinds and in general elaborates upon the teachings contained in "PATTERN OF BAHÁ'Í LIFE". The first part of it is entirely taken up with quotations from the letters of Shoghi Effendi, for example:—

"The great thing is to 'live the life' — to have our lives so saturated with the Divine teachings and the Bahá'í Spirit that people cannot fail to see a joy, a power, a love, a purity, a radiance, an efficiency in our character and work that will distinguish us from worldly-minded people and make people wonder what is the secret of this new life in us".

The value of this book is enhanced by the inclusion of a comprehensive index as so many facets are mentioned in the letters.

Our National Assembly has made a gift to believers in the United Kingdom of a copy of this booklet but it is available from the Trust at 20p.

"LIVING THE LIFE" 20p.
"PATTERN OF BAHÁ'Í LIFE" 12p.



TRUST STAFF WEDDING

On 18 May June Rose, the first member of staff to be employed full time by the Trust which she joined on leaving school three years ago, was married. Although neither June nor her husband, Alan Strickland, are Bahá'ís, quite a number of the Trust customers throughout the world feel that they know her and the first of many telegrams of congratulation read out at the wedding reception was from Ken Gratton, Treasurer of the Bahá'í Book Sales Committee of Australia, cabled from Coogee.

BOOKS ON THE BÁB

With 20 October, the Birthday of the Báb, as the next Holy Day in our calendar, the Trust would like to remind the friends of two books on the Báb. The first is the magnificent volume written by Hand of the Cause Hasan Balyuzi, "THE BÁB", which was extensively reviewed in Journal No. 217 of June 1973, and which is a model of literary historicism. The author's family have been believers in this Revelation since its inception and the book contains reference to documents hitherto unpublished, in addition to appendices which bring together historical and political events of the time and statements of British representatives and others about happenings in Persia.

The second book, "EDWARD GRANVILLE BROWNE AND THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH" is an assessment by Mr Balyuzi of the writings of Professor Browne on the Bahá'í Faith. Professor Browne first became interested in the Bábí religion when he was a very young man and this interest was sustained throughout his life. He was privileged to have had an audience with Bahá'u'lláh and we owe to him the only pen-portrait which exists of the Blessed Beauty.

"THE BÁB" £1.60
"EDWARD GRANVILLE BROWNE AND THE
BAHÁ'Í FAITH" £2.00

Both published by George Ronald and available to believers in the British Isles from the Bahá'í Publishing Trust.

"TOKENS from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh": US Trust: £5

A collection of the Writings made and illustrated by Joy and Constance Conrader, both of whom are artists and writers. The book and jacket were designed by Eunice Braun and contains a varied selection of quotations illustrated by photographs and line drawings of flowers, birds, leaves etc. A delightful presentation volume.