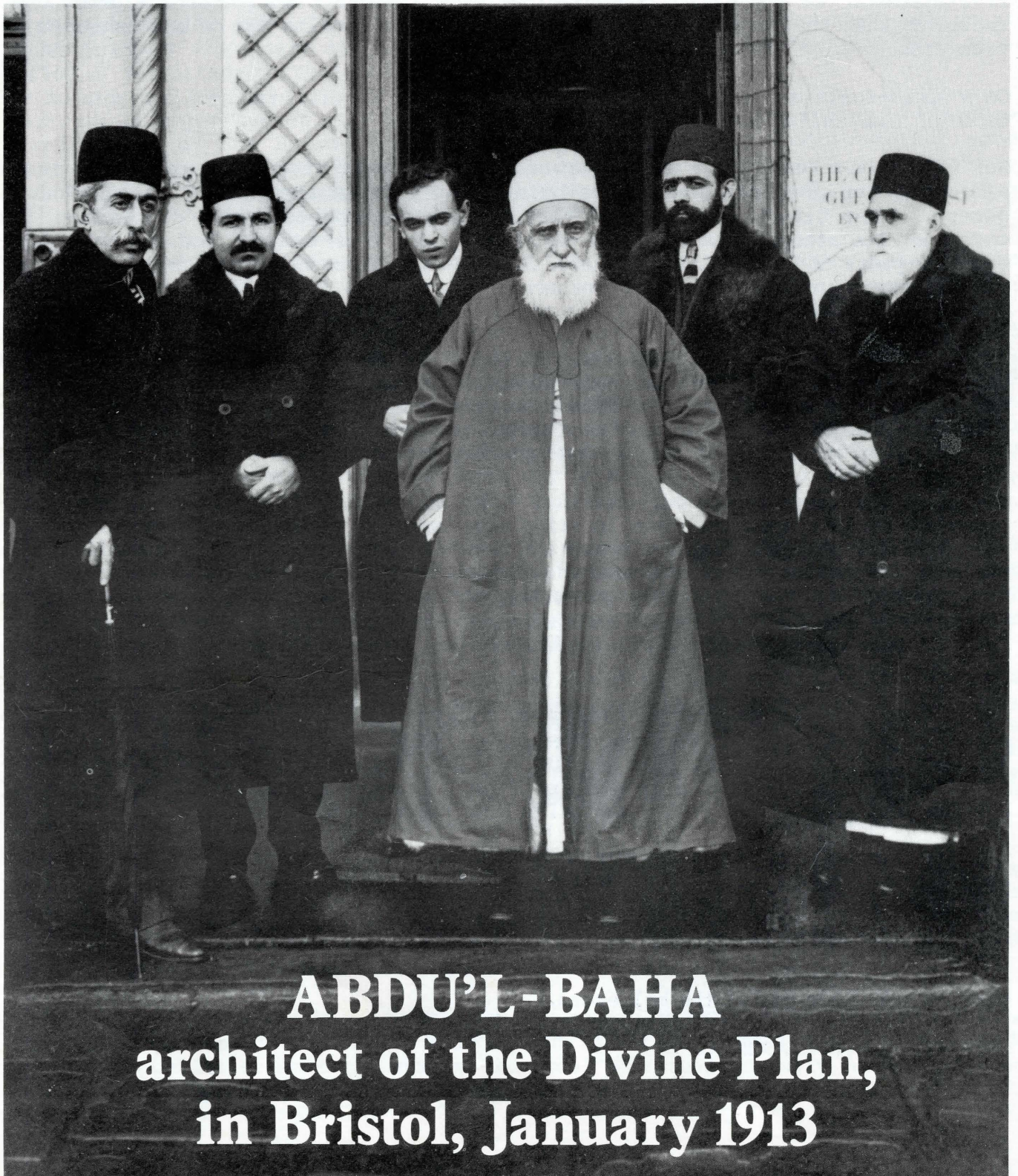


The
Bahá'í Journal

Volume One Issue Number 1



ABDU'L-BAHA
architect of the Divine Plan,
in Bristol, January 1913

National Spiritual Assembly

«Naw Ruz is different this year»

The last issue of the "Baha'i Journal", as the permanent record of the activities of the Baha'i community in the United Kingdom, appeared five years ago. Its front-page article bore the above headline, and dealt with the new and perilous situation in Iran as the effects of the Islamic Revolution began to show themselves. Now, half a decade on, we should review the changes which have taken place in that time.

Over everything looms the shadow of the persecution in the cradle of the Faith. More than 150 souls have laid down their lives for Baha'u'llah in that land, thousands more have suffered ill-treatment, privations, and homelessness. The very administrative structure of the Baha'i community has been disbanded and powerful figures have indicated that the long-term aim of the regime is the rooting out of the Baha'i Faith from Iran.

On a world-scale our community has suffered the loss of distinguished servants of the Cause of God, called home by illness and accident.

But there have been great steps forward. A reader of five years ago would stand amazed at the progress made in bringing the Faith to the notice of mankind in general. The flood, unforeseen at that time, of newspaper, radio and television coverage, the attention of national parliaments and international bodies, the sympathetic support of many politicians and clergy - all these have come from the work of the believers in publicising the persecutions in Iran. Such a basis for widespread teaching has come from the sacrifices of our Iranian brethren.

At the world centre of our Faith, the Universal House of Justice has moved into its Seat on Mount Carmel. There has been expansion of the International Teaching Centre, and an exciting new dimension of Baha'i activity has been unveiled with the guidance from the House of Justice on our involvement in matters of social importance, and the setting up of its Office of Social and Economic Development.

The great challenge facing our community today is one with which our observer of five years ago would sympathise - how to bring more souls to their God, how to unlock the hearts of the peoples of this country and enrol them in the Cause of Baha'u'llah. He would be envious of the advantages we now have to aid our teaching work, advantages stemming from our emergence from obscurity, but would know that unless we can place the Faith in the United Kingdom on a strong footing, through the establishment of more firmly-based local Spiritual Assemblies, these advantages, these sacrifices, will be thrown away.

This, then, is the challenge facing us today - to teach, to win new souls, to establish the Administrative Order ever more firmly. In this regard, at least, Naw-Ruz 1984 CE is no different from Naw-Ruz 1979 CE. Indeed it is even more appropriate to close this message with an excerpt from a message of the Universal House of Justice published in the Baha'i Journal's last issue, five years ago:

"As the turmoil of an agitated world surges about them the supporters of Baha'u'llah's majestically rising faith must, as the beloved Guardian so clearly indicated, scale nobler heights of heroism, serenely confident that the hour of their mightiest exertions must coincide with the lowest ebb of mankind's fast declining fortunes".

With warmest love to all the believers,

NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY

Naw-Ruz 141 BE

The significance of Ridvan

In 1912 'Abdu'l-Baha said "in the sacred Laws of God, in every cycle and dispensation, there are blessed feasts, holidays and workless days". He added, "during such days, institutions should be founded that may be of permanent benefit and value to the people". Such an institution is a Local Spiritual Assembly, which is re-elected once a year during the first day of Ridvan.

Ridvan is our Holy Day of pre-eminent splendour, the Day when Baha'u'llah declared His mission and revealed the promised Word of God, thereby announcing the new spring-time of mankind.

It is significant that on the commemoration of such a day, all our Local Spiritual Assemblies are re-elected. They are the shining lights, the heavenly beacons for a darkening world. They are the institutions that have been founded to be of "permanent benefit and value to the people". Moreover, we are told that, not until these function vigorously and harmoniously can the hope for the termination of this period of transition be realised.

However, it appears that many Baha'is do not have a good understanding of the true significance of the Ridvan elections. Reports have been received that some communities forget to even hold a Ridvan election, some hold it on a different day, some forget to notify the community when elections will be held, and others prepare a voting list with only the active believers on it.

It is vital that these Ridvan elections play their rightful part as pride of place in the yearly rhythm of Baha'i life.

Shoghi Effendi declared that "these Local Spiritual Assemblies will have to be elected directly by the friends and every declared believer of 21 years and above, far from standing aloof and assuming an indifferent or independent attitude, should regard it his sacred duty to take part conscientiously and diligently, in the election, the consolidation, and the efficient working of his own Local Assembly...to ensure uniformity throughout the East and the West, all Local Assemblies will have to be re-elected once a year during the first day of Ridvan, and the result of polling, if possible, declared on that day".

"In order to avoid division and disruption, that the Cause may not fall a prey to conflicting interpretations and lose thereby its purity and pristine vigour, that its affairs may be conducted with efficiency and promptness, it is necessary that every one should conscientiously take an active part in the election of these Assemblies..."

First, every adult believer over 21 in good standing should receive two weeks in advance a letter indicating where and when the election will be held. Enclose a simple ballot sheet with 9 empty lines and send it with the letter. Encourage the friends to come. Endeavour to make the meeting attractive, and convenient to all concerned. However, if for some unavoidable reason, the friends cannot attend, they should send the ballot form to the Local Assembly Secretary with the word "Ballot" clearly marked on the outside of the envelope, plus their name and address.

Even if there are only 9 members in a community, a Ridvan meeting should be held so that on that special day the spiritual forces can assist the assembled members to feel that special unity as they declare their Assembly formation. At the same time it enables them to elect their officers without delay and begin the new year with renewed hope and enthusiasm.

To take this day lightly is to ignore the fundamental principles of the Baha'i Faith, for the administrative order of Baha'u'llah is firmly grounded in the unity of mankind. To belittle the importance of the Local Spiritual Assembly formation is to misunderstand the mission of Baha'u'llah.

A Statement of Policy



From the Editor

The editorial board wish to draw to the attention of the friends the following points:

DEADLINES In order to increase standards of presentation and efficiency the Baha'i Journal is being printed by an outside printer. This means that our deadlines for receipt of material for inclusion must be strictly adhered to. If material is late for whatever reason it may be considered for the following issue.

CONTENT It would be appreciated if material submitted was either typed or neatly written and that the matter of the dignity of the Faith was kept in mind.

EDITORIAL RESPONSIBILITY The Editor reserves the right to reject, cut or alter any contribution submitted for publication in the interests of deadlines, topicality, appropriateness, standards or dignity.

Please try to adhere to these brief guidelines. Should you wish further guidance you may phone Richard Boyle at the National Office (01-584-2566)



DEADLINE

5 APRIL

No material received after this date can be considered for inclusion in the next issue.

As the Community grows and develops so its needs change. In an effort to take these changes into account, we have tried to produce a magazine of greater scope and depth. It is, of course, still in the process of being formed, and, like all new arrivals, it craves the indulgence of its onlookers for any awkwardness, boldness or presumption. It is yours for all its faults. Be kind to it, support it, and it will serve you to the best of its ability.

As we observe the world about us, we see the probing of space and the ocean floor, we see nations at war with each other and with themselves, we see burgeoning crime and drug abuse. Humanity, of which we are a part, is convulsed with a sickness that threatens to extinguish all life on this small planet. We all call upon God's Mercy to deliver our brothers and sisters from their suffering and aimlessness and think perhaps that our task is done. But God's Mercy exists on Earth in human form. We are the instruments of God's Mercy, and if we do not carry the healing message of Baha'u'llah to the waiting, dying world, it will wait and die in vain.

We are a seasoned community in the British Isles with many hard-won victories beneath our belts, but the greatest and toughest battles are yet to come. Let us not abandon our siblings to all the half-truths and untruths that abound in the world. Let us arise with renewed vigour at this New Year and present our beloved Universal House of Justice and our untiring National Spiritual Assembly with a victory that future generations of British Baha'is will be proud to recall. If the Journal can play its part, it will - with your help.

We have chosen to put on our first cover a picture of 'Abdu'l-Baha because He is our Exemplar and the Architect of the Divine Plan. The Seven Year Plan is a part of that Plan, it has God's sanction and blessing, and we cannot doubt that it will succeed.

We look forward to Letters to the Editor, articles, news, ideas and artwork from all corners of the United Kingdom. Let us make it a success!

THE EDITOR.

FROM DUBLIN TO CANBERRA- THE ANTIPODEAN CONNECTION

(The significance and link between the two conferences)

"The Call of God hath been raised, and the light of His countenance hath been lifted up upon men. It behoveth every man to blot out the trace of every idle word from the tablet of his heart, and gaze, with an open and unbiased mind, on the signs of His Revelation, the proofs of His Mission, and the tokens of His glory".

A study of the Writings of our Faith make it clear we have a glorious goal to work for in contrast to the serious declining conditions existing through-out the world today. The Universal House of Justice in its message of March 1981 addressed to the Baha'is of the World outlined another stage of the Seven Year Plan and among many other goals stated "The holding, during the first nine months of 1982 of five International Conferences, in Lagos-

Nigeria; Montreal-Canada; Quito-Ecuador; Dublin-Ireland; and Manila." As a result of changed conditions The Universal House of Justice later transferred the Conference from Manila to Canberra and the National Spiritual Assembly of Australia quickly set up plans for it to be held in the Federal Capital, 1st to 5th September, 1982. In both Ireland and Australia there were the official representatives of The Universal House of Justice and over 2,000 believers attended each conference.

At first there was the thought that the significance was that both conferences were about The Baha'i Faith and its regional plans and then it reminded me of an occasion when a commercial traveller came to my engineering office and presented his card, Mr. Brynner. So I asked was he related to the famous actor in Hollywood and he said yes he was connected through Adam. We are all connected by being believers and fellow workers in this great Cause of God. However, it is interesting that there is a link between Dublin and Canberra, perhaps not so well known, but quite apart from the given goals. Mr. John Henry and Mrs Clara Hyde-Dunn are the pioneers of this continent of Australia. Both were born in London, England. Mrs Clara Dunns' mother, Maria was Irish and married to Mr. Thomas Holder, a London policeman. Clara was their sixth child and all the family whilst she was still young moved to Canada.

In his memoriam it is recorded, "John Henry Hyde-Dunn was born in London England, the son of a consulting chemist. In early childhood he was dangled upon the knee of Charles Dickens, and was amused and entertained by Cruikshank the famous illustrator of Dickens' works. As a young man, after engaging in business in Great Britain and on the continent, he emigrated to the United States". Their story of Mr. Dunn giving Mrs Clara Davis (widow) the Message in Walla Walla, Washington, their both meeting with 'Abdu'l Baha in San Francisco, of the passing of Mrs Fanny Dunn in 1916 and of his marriage to Mrs Clara Davis on 9th July, 1917, of their pioneering to the continent of Australia and establishing local assemblies and eventually he being elected to the first National Spiritual Assembly in May 1934, of his passing to the Abha Kingdom 17th February 1941, of Clara's appointment as a Hand of the Cause of God 29th February, 1952, and of the Guardian's cable "Hyde Dunn regarded Hand" makes them one of the most unique couples of the Baha'i World and both Hands of the Cause of God, and both born in the same London. In this way there is an indirect connection from the International Conference in Dublin and that of the Asian/Australasian Baha'i Conference in Canberra, Australia.



The Hand of the Cause H. Collis Featherstone relays by telephone the greetings of the friends assembled at the Canberra Conference to those attending the Montreal Conference.

The International Dublin Conference Message was directed to the European Continent of which Baha'u'llah has spent some time and later from His "remote prison" had sent forth "the first of those challenging, world-shaking addresses to the kings and rulers, six of whom were European potentates". "The five international conferences of the Seven Year Plan were called to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the passing of the Greatest Holy Leaf, to discuss anew the present condition of the Faith in a turbulent world society, to examine the great opportunities for its future growth and development, and to focus attention on the unfulfilled goals of the Plan".

The Universal House of Justice reminds the believers "You are engaged on a Seven Year Plan and have made devoted and sacrificial efforts to attain its objectives. But its ultimate purpose, as that of all other plans, namely the attracting of the masses of mankind to the all-embracing shelter of the Cause of God, still evades us. Particularly in Europe. We have not, as yet, found the secret of setting aglow the hearts of great numbers of Europeans with the divine fire. This must now be your constant preoccupation, the subject of your deliberations at this Conference, the purpose of your lives, to which you will attain "only if you arise to trample beneath your feet every earthly desire". The challenge is to arise and serve the Cause of God.

On the opposite side of the world where the Canberra Asian/Australasian Conference took place it represented a vast region of the earth wherein is over half of the world's population. The call to the Baha'is was a restatement of the beloved Guardian's message to Australia as well as to Japan regarding the Spiritual Axis "extending from the Antipodes to the Northern Islands of the Pacific Ocean". Referring to the National Assemblies at the Northern and Southern poles of that axis Shoghi Effendi went on to say -

"A responsibility, at once weighty and inescapable, must rest on the communities which occupy so privileged a position in so vast and turbulent an area of the globe. However great the distance that separates them; however much they differ in race, language, custom and religion; however active the political forces which tend to keep them apart and foster racial and political antagonisms, the close and continued association of these communities in their common, their peculiar and paramount task of raising up and of consolidating the embryonic World Order of Baha'u'llah in those regions of the globe, is a matter of vital and urgent importance, which should receive on the part of the elected representatives of their communities, a most earnest and prayerful consideration."

"May this community (Australia) which, with its sister community in the North, has had the inestimable privilege of being called into being in the lifetime of, and through the operation of the dynamic forces released by the Centre of Baha'u'llah's Covenant, continue, with undimmed vision, with redoubled vigour, and unwavering fidelity and constancy, to discharge its manifold and ever increasing duties and responsibilities, and lend, as the days go by, an impetus such as it has not lent before, in the course of almost two score years of its existence, to the propagation of the Faith it has so whole-heartedly espoused and is now so valiantly serving, and play a memorable and distinctive part in hastening the establishment, and in ensuring the gradual efflorescence and ultimate fruition, of its divinely appointed embryonic World Order (Shoghi Effendi letter in 1957).

Japan likewise had calls in regard to the Spiritual Axis involving Australia of taking the Faith to the Pacific Islands, many of which in the North Pacific have older people speaking Japanese. Forty five Japanese believers attended the Conference including the members of the National Spiritual Assembly. There were joint consultations at that time concerning the responsibilities of each and some plans are still operating.

The spirit of these conferences - Dublin and Canberra and no doubt as well in the other International great gatherings, was uplifting to both heart and mind and many Baha'is were 'up on cloud nine' with stars in their eyes seeing what Baha'u'llah's stupendous Revelation is achieving. Particularly did this apply to some of the

Baha'is from the Pacific Islands especially those who had never been out of their islands before. The many subjects presented by excellent speakers added to the unforgettable spiritual experience in both International Conferences. The calls for pioneers and travel teachers resulted in a wonderful response. In each place the donations to the International Fund was praiseworthy and reflected the new spirit emanating from the Conference. Of the ten countries with more than 1% of the population now Baha'is, seven of them are in the Pacific Ocean, with Kiribati 6.97%. (was Gilbert Islands in the past under British Administration).

When we look back we see these conferences as stages or stepping stones in the progress of the Cause of God. The persecution, martyrdoms and long suffering of the Iranian believers have, the Universal House of Justice has written"... called forth fresh energies in the hearts of the friends, have fed the deep roots of the Cause and given rise to a great harvest of victories." Further-more they say "Among the outstanding features of the teaching and consolidation work are the continuing effective results of the participation of more than sixteen thousand believers from all parts of the world in the five International Conferences; intensive teaching campaigns carried out with the active support of all levels of the Community and drawing upon the enthusiasm and capacity of Baha'i youth; the establishment of a second radio station in South America; the re-formation of the National Spiritual Assemblies of Uganda and Nepal, and the establishment of nine new National Spiritual Assemblies, two of which will be elected during the month of May this year (1983), bringing the total of these secondary Houses of Justice to 135..... The powers released by Baha'u'llah match the needs of the time..... It is time for rejoicing. Lift up your hearts. THE DAY OF GOD IS HERE." (MESSAGE 140 B.E.)

A TRAVEL-TEACHER IN NORTHERN IRELAND



"Stikkinout sotis!" This is the native Ulster expression to indicate the speaker's unbounded enthusiasm for something and that is precisely how I would describe my recent travel teaching trip to Northern Ireland. I first went to the Province nine years ago and fell in love with the place, the people and the Baha'is. I promised then to return and I have done so twice since.

There are many reasons why the Baha'is of the United Kingdom should consider travel teaching (or even pioneering) to Northern Ireland. In the first place we all know that teaching the Faith is our first obligation and that all assistance to us will be cut off if we do not fulfill it. We also know that great bounties are showered on those who arise to teach and every step taken for the sake of delivering the Divine Message to other

souls is blessed and supported and magnified. We should all leap at any opportunity to teach, whether it be our next door neighbour or the thirsty inhabitant of a more remote and distant locale.

Often we are willing to travel teach but we do not know where to go; we cannot make up our minds, we do not have much time or a lot of money and our school French or Arabic is all we have besides our English to communicate with. Never fear! Northern Ireland is far enough away over the Irish Sea to be exciting to travel to. You can choose your mode of travel - plane, car and boat or train and boat. But it is not too far and the cost of travel is not prohibitive. It is part of the United Kingdom, so you do not require a visa or a passport or a change of currency. You do not need to be able

to speak a foreign language, thought you may need a few hours to adjust your ears to the accents of the Ulster people.

Northern Ireland is well served with transport facilities - there are buses, a railway line connecting many of the main towns, and the roads are excellent.

Motoring in Ulster is a pleasure - there are very few vehicles on the roads compared with England. Indeed the population being so small leads to many other benefits - there are no great office blocks, no seas of concrete, and no great sprawls of decaying suburbia. There is an abundance of green, green fields and trees, mountains, sparkling rivers, streams and loughs. The sea is never very far away, the air is always fresh and it is peaceful - so peaceful and unhurried. The food is wonderful - soda bread, potato bread, and as for an "Ulster Fry" - made by the fair hands of a native Ulsterman - a knockout!

More important than all these are the people of Northern Ireland - they do not seem to have been too much affected by the dehumanising materialism of the urbanised mainland. The inhabitants of Ulster are very friendly, generous approachable, humorous and hospitable people. They have retained the neighbourliness and warmth of England as it was twenty or thirty years ago. They are lively and talkative and yet will always give you a sympathetic hearing. You would like them too.

Perhaps more important still are the Baha'is of Northern Ireland - they are few, well spread and extremely hard working and have a spiritual fire all of their own. They seem to be able to organise events at very short notice, though I do not recommend that you abuse their talents in this direction. They are able to make excellent use of anyone who comes their way. Firesides are well attended and exciting, public meetings are guaranteed to provoke interest and support. Your trip to Northern Ireland would not be wasted. You will be treated like royalty - I was.

There is no getting away from the fact that Northern Ireland receives a very bad press - it is almost always in the news for one reason or another - people see burning vehicles, bombed out shops armed police, troops and bodies riddled with bullet-holes on their screens and in their papers and imagine a whole province seething with civil war, battered and shelled into a wasteland reminiscent of

Flanders. This is unfortunate. It is also untrue. The violence and the trouble are generally confined to particular areas of Belfast, particular areas of Londonderry and certain border areas. They are also confined to particular groups of people - the extremists and the security forces. It is far more dangerous for the British citizen to walk the shopping streets of London during the day, or the parks and lanes at night. You are far more likely to suffer the dangers of rape, mugging, and road accidents in an around your own homes. Ulster is no more nor less dangerous than most other parts of the United Kingdom. And, in any case, what business has a Baha'i with fear or mistrust in God's protection?

The Baha'is of Northern Ireland warmly invite you to visit them, or to pioneer to any one of their many goals. Property is cheap, education is good, shops are plentiful, friends are easy to find, opportunities do exist. It is true that the Northern Irish people are deeply divided by a common religion. The province desperately needs the healing Message of Baha'u'llah. If you have room in your heart spare a thought and say a prayer for these wonderful people, and if you have the strength to lift a telephone receiver, or take up a pen, contact the Northern Ireland Committee or the Baha'i Society of the New University of Ulster. The latter can pay for your trip if you agree to speak to the students there! You won't regret it, I promise you! And if I wished you a fraction of the joy I have experienced in Northern Ireland you'd be a very happy person.

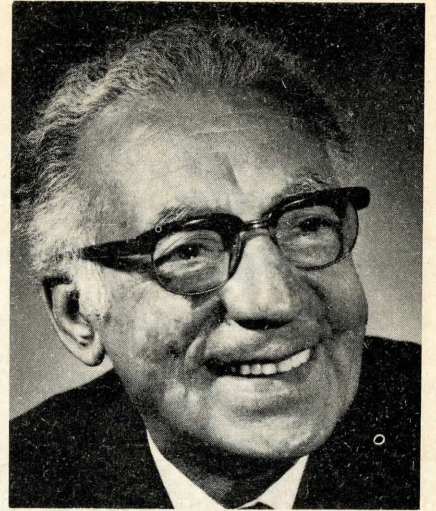
In His Tablets of the Divine Plan, 'Abdu'l-Baha has pointed to the three conditions for attaining the supreme station destined for us:

"The first condition is firmness in the Covenant of God....

The second condition: Fellowship and love amongst the believers....

The third condition: Teachers must continually travel to all parts of the continent, nay, rather, to all parts of the world... sanctified and free from every attachment and in the utmost severance" pp 18-20.

Northern Ireland is a small part of the world which is often forgotten, perhaps because people prefer to forget it - but you, of course, can put all that right! All in all, Northern Ireland is a fine place to be, or, as the natives would say: "Norn Iron? Sallrite, sotis!"



بگواهی تاریخ ادیان در هر زمان که مظهر مرحضرت یزدان پرده از رخ برانداخت و رایت هدایت در قطب آفاق برافراخت مورد اذیت و آزار همان نفوسیکه منتظر ظهور آن فرستاده رب غفور بودند گردید و بهزاران بلا دچار گشت که خوانندگان محترم این مقاله خودیان واقف و مطلعند و در بیانات مبارکه و متون تاریخیه تلاوت و زیارت نموده اند. تا بعان و پیروان مظاهر مقدسه نیز بهمین سرنوشت دچار بوده و بکمال مظلومیت تحمّل همه گونه رنج و عنا و محنت و ابتلا نموده و جمعی کثیر از برنا و پیر برتبه رفیعۀ شهادت نیز نائل شده اند در زمان ما نیز در موطن اعلی صدها نفر از برگزیدگان جلیل اکبر و ناظران بمنظرا طهر فقط بجرم بهائی بودن و عدم تبرّی از معتقدات روحانی یا در زوایای زندان متحمّل ظلم و عدوانند و یا بیای چوبۀ دار میروند و یا سینه بی کینه را هدف تیر جلاّدان بی امان مینمایند و بعضی از این نفوس متجذبه دست قاتلان خود را میبوسند و قبل از شهادت کام آنان را شیرین میکنند.

عدالت حقّ جلّ جلاله مقتضی آن بوده و هست که در قبال اینهمه محنت و ابتلا بآن نفوس مبارکه پادشاه خروی و مقامات علوی عنایت فرماید و تاج مرصعی بر سر آن عاشقان روی جانان بنهد که جواهر زوهرش علی ممرّ القرون و الاعصار بتابد. جمال قدم پس از شهادت شهدای یزد در لوحی چنین میفرماید قوله الاعلی :

"... امروز اهل ملاء اعلی و جتّ علیا بکمال بهجت و نشاط و فرح و انبساط با هم معاشرند و بشارت لقا میدهند که ارواح مقدسه نورانیّه از ارض یا صعود نمود کلّ استقبال نموده اند... و اهل خباء مجید هر یک باین کلمۀ مبارکه علیا ناطق یوم فرح آمد دوستان در گلشن ربّانی با انفس روحانی بعیش جاودانی و عشرت ابدی مشغول..."

حضرت ولی امر الله در توقیع منیع رضوان ۸۹ تحقّق جمیع امور مهمّه امریّه را

نتیجۀ خون پاک شهیدان ایران میدانند و " اهراق دماء مطهره شهیدان ایران " را سبب و علت اقبال ملکه رومانی و تمام بنیان اولین مشرق الاذکار اقطار غربیه و شہوت ورسوخ احباء عزیز آلمان در دوران پرهیجان قیام دشمنان و ارتفاع علم امرالله در دیار مصریه و قیام احباء غرب بفتح اقالیم جدیدہ دانستہ و مزیدہ داده اندکہ " اهراق دماء مطهره شهیدان ایران " عاقبہ الامراقلیم جلیل ایران را جنة التعمیم خواهند نمود و در بین قرن نورانی روی زمین را بہشت برین خواهند کرد و سراپردہ وحدت عالم انسان را در قطب آفاق مرتفع خواهند ساخت و صلح اعظم تأسیس خواهند شد و عالم ادنی مرآت جنت ابہی خواهد گشت .

الحمد لله احباء عزیز ایران کہ در بلاد خارجه ساکنند بچشم خود شمره مظلومیّت و جانبازی و شہادت خواهند و برادران روحانی خود را در جمیع اقطار جهان می بینند و شب و روز سعی و جاہدند کہ بالوکالہ از آن محرومان و مظلومان درمیدان تبلیغ و خدمت جولان نمایند و چنان بموجب وصایا و نصائح الہی رفتار کنند کہ جاذب و جالب نفوس طالبیہ مستعدہ با مرمبارک گردند و باین بیان مبارک مرکز میثاق کہ در صفحہ ۵۶ از مکاتیب جلد پنجم مندرج ناظرو عالمند قولہ اللاحق:

"... قسم بعنایت اسم اعظم کہ اگر نفوس چنانکہ با یدوشا ید مبعوث

گردند در مدتی قلیلہ روی زمین بہشت برین گردد و این تودہ غیرا

جنت ابہی شود ای یاران بخلق و خوی رحمن در مجمع انسان مبعوث

گردید تا آن نفحات مشکین مشام جہانیاں را معطر نماید و پرتو

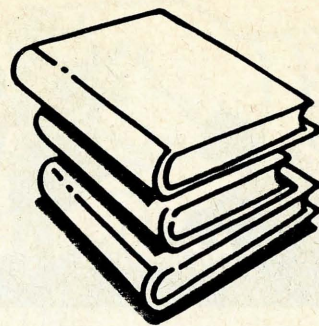
ہدایت کبری شرق و غرب را منور نماید..." انتہی

ارض اقدس - حیفا - شہر السلطان ۱۴۰

علی کبر فروتن

Bahá'í Youth Page

BAHA'I BOOKS Where do you start?



"Immerse yourselves in the ocean of My words, that ye may unravel its secrets, and discover all the pearls of wisdom that lie in its depths." BAHÁ'U'LLAH

As Baha'is we know we should read the Writings, but where to start, how much, when and for what reasons are questions that, perhaps, are not so easily answered. In many ways English-speaking Baha'is are spoiled for choice. We have so much translated and written in our native tongue that we really need some kind of guidance as to how to approach it all.

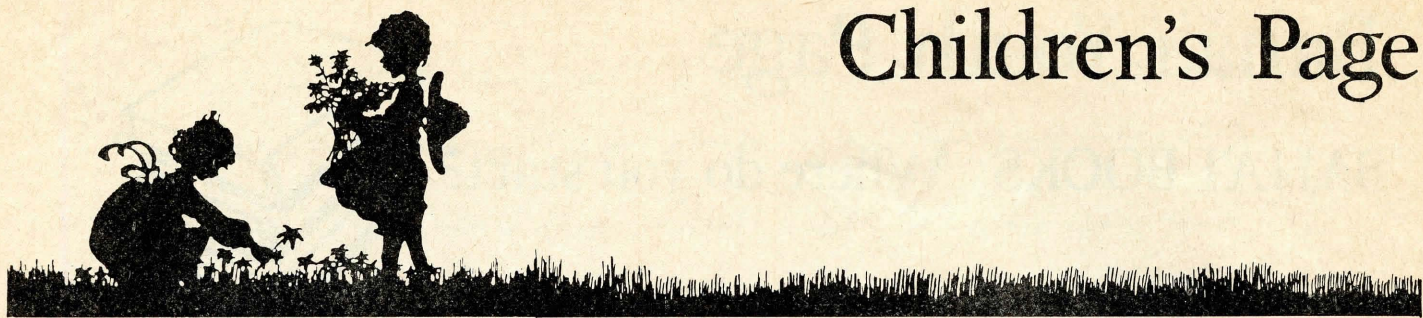
First of all, we need to get straight the reasons why we should read Baha'i Scripture. If we turn to page 49 of the Synopsis and Codification of the Laws and Ordinances of the Kitab-i-Aqdas, we find among the Miscellaneous Exhortations the following:

- "j) To recite the holy verses at morn and at eventide.
- h) To immerse one's self in the study of the Teachings.
- g) To refer to the Holy Writ when differences arise.
- f) Not to depart from the writings or to be misled by those who do."

The important thing about the Writings is that we should be in regular and loving contact with them - reading our Baha'i books should be as natural as eating, as washing and as dressing each day. If we have not said a prayer or read a short extract of a morning it is as if we have gone out of the house without our clothes on. And if we go to bed without having done the same thing it is as if we have not done our homework or said goodnight to our families. The secret is: a little and often - do not tire yourself with long passages or two-hour sessions.

In the coming months the Journal will try to examine Baha'i books in as helpful a way as possible. In the meantime, if you are thinking of making, or adding to, a little Baha'i Library of your own, here are a few suggestions:

- 1) Above all you need a prayer book of your own. It should go with you everywhere. It should become tatty with use rather than remain stiff and spotless on a shelf or bedside cupboard. Set yourself to learn ten of the shortest or your favourite prayers over a year.
- 2) It would be a good idea to have an introductory book on the Faith - to refer to, to refresh your memory, to help answer friends' questions etc. Baha'u'llah and the New Era is still a cheap and excellent reference book on the Faith and was praised by Shoghi Effendi.
- 3) For small and manageable passages from the Scriptures to read on a regular daily basis The Pattern of Baha'i Life takes some beating.
- 4) For something really deep and movingly beautiful Baha'u'llah's own Hidden Words cannot be surpassed.
- 5) You ought to know about the lives of the Central Figures of the Faith, because it is very difficult to love someone you do not know, and it is hard to obey someone you do not love. Although they might seem difficult to read at first, Hassan Balyuzi's three biographies of the Bab, Baha'u'llah and Abdu'l-Baha make wonderful reading.
- 6) To understand Their significance in relation to the world and to yourself, you should have a copy of Shoghi Effendi's The Dispensation of Baha'u'llah. This one will need careful reading and re-reading and will need to be discussed with other youth or older Baha'is.
- 7) Finally, for the time being, you would do well to familiarise yourself with the workings of Baha'u'llah's embryonic World Order - as a preparation for your service in coming years. For this Principles of Baha'i Administration is an excellent handbook.



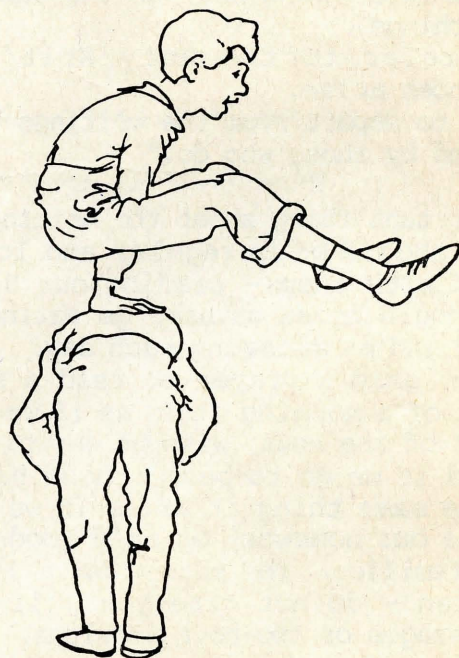
"The beginning of all things is the knowledge of God."

His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh

*Whoever we are, whatever we do, we must
first know about God, Who made the world.
God is the parent of all creatures and all things.*

Here is a little rhyme to learn:

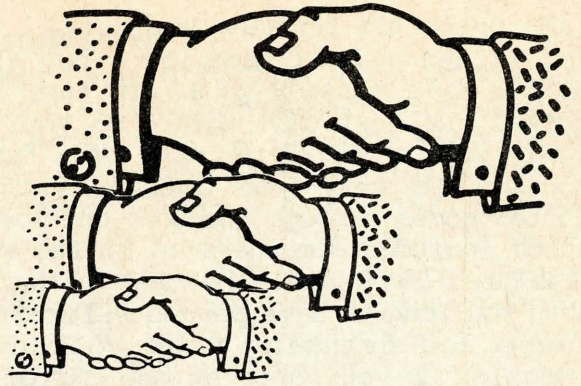
*God made you and me,
Everybody you see,
The flower, the tree,
The apple, the marrow,
The blackbird, the sparrow,
The dog, the horse,
And everything, of course,
From mountain to stone,
From skin to bone,
The world is God's own.*



For New Believers

INTER-RELATIONSHIPS

Part one



Fine, so we have recognized and accepted Baha'u'llah, we have attended our Nineteen Day Feasts, celebrated our Holy Days, we have given up alcohol, we probably never had much to do with hard-line drugs, we still have the odd cigarette and maybe we even manage the occasional bit of teaching; at any rate, we call ourselves Baha'is.

Now we have largely forsaken the ways of the "old world" as we call it, and we find ourselves part of a new community. Former friends melt into the background, former unquestioned habits fall gradually by the wayside, the whole focus of our lives shifts completely. For a long while we may well feel disorientated, lost and overwhelmed. Suddenly our homes are not our homes any more, they're always full of people we never saw before and they're talking about things you never discussed or even thought of before. They need feeding and watering too, and if they have come a long way they need a bed. Overnight you are called upon to mount a catering task that most hotels would baulk at. Life is lived at a higher pace now - more urgency - more deep thinking - more sacrifice is called for. But in this new community details are often lost in the general flood of intense feelings - promptness seems to suffer first so for an 8.00 meeting you advertise for 7.30. No longer do we have the parliamentary discussion, which consists in shouting your own opinion as loud as possible and insulting your interlocutor in answer to his reply - neither side having paid any real attention to what the other had said: that goes out with the cocktail cabinet, water-pipe and red bulbs. This time nothing we say is counted as our own, opinion is divorced from personality and debate proceeds point by point with the strangest impersonality but with the feeling that everyone is involved. But sometimes it is so difficult to cope with you find yourself spouting forth pure ego and the others are looking at their laps

in embarrassment. It takes a while to perfect and, boy, it hurts - never to take credit for an idea that sprang from your lips - it is called "consultation". We find ourselves feeling so inadequate and lacking in knowledge among the other people we have now joined - it no longer gives us a kick to boast of the number of pints we could sink in an evenings pub-crawling or the variety of girlfriends we got through at school; there is an almighty diversion of emphasis to such topics as sacrifice and its mysteries, the nature of prayer, and so on. You are battling at the limits of your understanding now, and your brain hurts. With constant encouragement, among plentiful examples, in the framework of regular involvement you develop fairly evenly and soon achieve some confidence and progress. A place is gradually earned in the new community, the novelty wears off and a more stable conviction settles upon you. The slog begins.

That's one way but not the only one, by any means - a gradual, considered introduction to an alternative way of life one might think was preferable. Sometimes it doesn't happen that way. One day, as if out of the blue, a hoarde of strange people descend on your town or village, filling the car parks, restaurants, Wimpy Bars and the streets. Pamphlets and posters appear overnight, are thrust into peoples' hands, find their way onto tables, into shopping baskets and the whole scene becomes one of hilarity and half-organised chaos. Toward the end of the day this excitement seems to be focusing on one particular hall and you go along. After all, why should they all suddenly come here of all places, and why are they so happy? You go in and POW!- you've never seen so much coffee, biscuits, high talk, pamphlets and unbridled affection in all your life and it really is quite overwhelming. After an incredible evening you walk home six feet off the ground. And when you

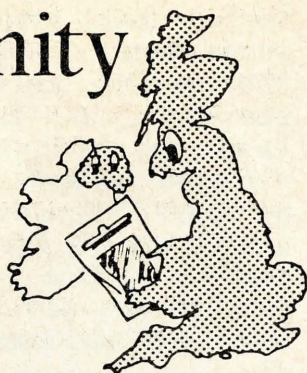
wake up in the morning you recall that you joined a New Community - but those people have already gone. And they don't appear the next day. You're on your own again with a small glimpse of a future society to keep you company until a letter comes through the door one morning which includes somewhere in it the words "Isolated Believer". And that is perhaps when you long to have people filling your house and drinking your coffee and knocking on your door at one o'clock in the morning to tell you how nice you are and could we say a few prayers. After accepting the Faith under such circumstances there is very little by way of inter-relationship and any growth would have to be independent, through any books left behind and a very severe test!

Assuming then, that you have advanced some little way and have settled into the new community, you may be called upon to sit on a committee or even a Local Spiritual Assembly. With up to eight other people who share your new duties, your house is now filled with paper and envelopes, stamps and lists and maps, and the telephone never stops ringing. You try keeping sixty or so people in constant contact, arranging some event, and ring them up to ask if they can bring the cups to the meeting next Saturday, to which the statutory reply is : "What meeting?" "Didn't you get the letter?" "What letter - oh yes, we got something but we used it to wipe up the milk John spilt - it was a Feast, you see, dear, and when we came to read it the ink was smudged." And so it goes on. You arrange a Dawn prayer meeting and people arrive between the hours of eight and eleven to apologize, speakers, friends, food, utensils, drink and halls, all to be at the same place at the same time - that calls for a supreme effort in the field of inter-relationships ... Conference at such and such a hall in such and such a town and it's on the 14th and the letter's dated the 10th, but you go, with a whole list of suggestions. And when you get there it's a bit like school. They call the register and a third of the people are missing. Someone stands up and he's very nice but you cannot hear what he says because he's not a trained speaker and there's a kid behind you blowing a toy trumpet and the attentive friend beside you is whispering his ideas into your right ear. Then people take turns to stand up and the consultation

starts. And it nearly always seems to start: "Well, we didn't do that because we're going to. And it's never your turn because they break for lunch as you're about to stand up, and it's Sunday - no shops open and, oh dear, you came such a long way and got up so early you forgot to make any sandwiches. But someone gives you a tomato and a cup cake, so you're all right. Finally they make a lot of good plans and you get home and never managed to tell them all about your hassles. In the future we will have to organise the world, so if you think Schools and Conventions are a hassle then it is suggested you don't think that way any more - it gives you ulcers.

And what of each other - what a motley crew Baha'u'llah has chosen to do His work - many of us might have been moved to comment, on occasion - why him or why her? Different things turn on different people - I go a bomb on sniffing creosote, with others it might be chandelier smashing or bomb disposal, but one thing is for sure - the Baha'i Faith turns us all on or we wouldn't be here, right? Baha'u'llah has rejected the statesmen, nobles, Divine Leaders, Politicians, the Top Brass and the Military - after all, they gave His message short thrift a hundred years ago. Instead He has chosen the school-teacher, the refrigerator warehouse man, the telephonist, the shipping clerk, the brickie, the decorator, the vendopac machine servicing operative, the farmer and so on - the simple everyday people, from the African village to the Sioux reservation, from the Vietnamese peasant to the Belfast shopkeeper. So we're bound to botch things up - no one can become a secretary, a treasurer, a chairman, a local government administrator overnight, and no one is asking us to. No one can spout the erudite words of Baha'u'llah at a given signal without their having had time to read some of them first. We're all having to live and work together in an intimacy and confidence-sharing that most families never get a hint of. Our egos come under more direct fire than in any other society, I shouldn't wonder. Sharp stones get a pretty rough ride in any stream - all good geographers would tell you that, if they could be bothered. So don't complain when you get a few corners knocked off you - it's good for you - pebbles get a smoother ride later - you'll see.

Community News



KINGSTON-UPON-THAMES

The Baha'is of Kingston-upon Thames were delighted to have fourteen non-Baha'i guests (including the Inspector of Education, heads of schools and teachers) at a fireside/slide show on 23rd February. This was the result of the NSA's instruction to approach the Education authorities with the intention of encouraging them to include the Baha'i Faith on the religious curriculum of schools in the Borough. Subsequently, the local Baha'is had a meeting with the Inspector of Education, and she then showed enough interest to be invited to a fireside. When this was arranged, she asked whether she could bring along five colleagues! Everyone enjoyed the evening, which began with an excellent presentation of slides by Adam Thorne. Many questions were discussed later and one lady offered to have a fireside in her home! For those who could stay after refreshments, there was the additional treat of live music by members of the charity-fund-raising group, Atlantic Wave Band, one member of which is a Kingston Baha'i.

LONDONDERRY

The Ladies Circle of the Londonderry Round Table recently asked for a Baha'i speaker and February 29th saw a nervous (male) member of the local community addressing an audience of some 20 women. The persecution of the Baha'is in Iran made a suitable starting point as reference was made to the fact that Baha'i women were suffering because they played a full part in the administration. Also mentioned was the fact that all three Iranian Baha'is in Derry are women who have had friends and relations killed or imprisoned.

From this there followed a general talk on the teachings and development of the Faith. The discussion afterwards was more lively and interesting than usually follows a lecture. Literature on the Faith and its attitude to the position of women in society was distributed.

WOLVERHAMPTON

A Baha'i has a regular spot on a local radio station. Independent Radio Beacon 303, which won the Sanford St. Martins trust award for outstanding merit in religious broadcasting in 1981, serves over one and a half million people in the West Midlands and Black Country. Beacon Radio contacted a Baha'i from Wyre Forest district to ask her if she would present a 'thought for the day' for a week on a regular basis - once a every three months. The nearby Baha'i communities had previously spoken with Beacon Radio about the current situation in Iran, this gave rise to the present contact. The speaker is introduced as a Baha'i but the thought for the day is not specifically about the Baha'i Faith. It lasts for one to two minutes and is broadcast four times a day with a new thought each day for six days a week.

STEVENAGE

The Stevenage Community began its success in teaching activities in October 1983, when, as a result of the letters sent to local womens groups and churches on the persecutions in Iran, the Baha'is were invited to the AGM of the Local Council of Churches, to describe the problems further. It was decided to put petitions in all the local churches for members to sign, demanding basic human rights for the Baha'is of Iran. About 700 signatures were collected, and these were presented by the Chairman of the Council to the Iranian Embassy in an hour long interview with two members of Embassy staff.



On 5th November the Baha'i Week was opened by an exhibition in the Town Square. Many came to look at the exhibition stands, ask questions and take literature. Local children publicised the Faith by having Baha'i balloons tied to their pushchairs etc.

On 7th November the Mayor planted a tree in the local park in memory of the Iranian Martyrs, to which all the local press were invited, and in the evening, a reporter called at a local Baha'i home to make a write-up on how the persecutions in Iran were personally effecting lives of local believers families.

On 11th November a Firework Party was held to commemorate the Birth of Baha'u'llah, to which many non-Baha'is were invited, and on 12th November - 'A Cry from the Heart' and 'Call to the Nations' were presented to the local MP - Tim Wood, for his interest and support for the Baha'is.

Throughout the Week Firesides were held in individual believers homes, bringing many new contacts to hear about the Faith.

The Press coverage and Publicity raised by the Baha'i Week led invitations to give talks to local organisations. Speakers were invited to talk on the Faith to the Professional and Business Womens Group and Hitchin Quakers, forging new friendships.

On 30th December the Baha'is were requested to join members of local churches for a Carol Service for Peace, (the only non-Christian religion to be invited). A non-Baha'i read out three Baha'i Writings during the evening, and the 'Witness for Peace' was Kari-anna Christopherson, who was able to put forward the Baha'i viewpoint in her personal thoughts on how Peace could be achieved.

During the Service a Priest, upon reading a prayer for enemies, was moved to request the congregation to pray for the Baha'is in Iran.

Other 1983 activities have included the manning of a stall about the Faith at the Ideas Fayre in Letchworth, and a two-week Baha'i books and pamphlets exhibition in the local library.

Increased teaching activities, as well as leading to a tremendous growth of interest in the Faith, has revitalised the Community, and drawn its members closer together through joint activities.

NEWCASTLE: N. IRELAND

Down Group held its first Exhibition in Newcastle, Main street, Co. Down, N. Ireland. Around 40 people visited the exhibition. The 'high spot' of the event was a visit by the English Literature "A" Level class, with their teacher, who had read 2 Baha'i books. They took leave of the classes to attend the Exhibition.

Various Local People attended by personal invitation, remaining for coffee and leaving with leaflets and a better understanding of the faith. Others stopped to read the posters displayed on the windows. As a direct result the local newspaper 'Mourne Observer' carried an article on the Faith and printed a photograph.

Support was given by the friends both from North and South of the Border.

WAVERLEY

During the past year Waverley Community has had sustained proclamation activities including a series of exhibitions and mail-outs. It was the responsible LSA for the Surrey Agricultural Show in May, continuing through the summer months with the Godalming Round Table Fete, the Farnham Lions Fayre and the Cranleigh Show. Also several exhibits were displayed in the Godalming Library, including specific themes for National Baha'i Week, Human Rights Day and World Religion Day as well as 'storing' the Brighton exhibition there between shows. This same Library has accepted more than a dozen Baha'i books from members of the community in recent years, and also has a number of books on both World Religions and Israel which mention the Faith favourably. This year instead of the LSA presenting books to the Baha'i children on Baha'u'llah's Birthday, each of the 5 Libraries in Waverley was presented with a children's book.

In April more than 20 selected Churches and Groups were invited to join the LSA in the day of prayer. In June 100 Schools and Church and Women's Groups were written to asking them to pray and act on behalf of the martyrs of Shiraz. In October every school in the District was offered Baha'i books and speakers and asked to put the Faith on their curriculum, having first ascertained from the Chief of Education in the area that they are free to do so.

At the same time regular advertisements have been placed in two local papers, formerly using Quotations but now with the 'doves' logo. Association with the United Nations' Association continues to bear fruit, with a big Interfaith Service in the Cathedral Refectory this year, replacing the 'One World Week' church service with the token Baha'i prayer of recent years. The Baha'i representative on the local UNA arranged this service, with friends from the local Hindu, Sikh, Jewish and Moslem and Buddhist

communities attending.

The Community is having an encouraging number of telephone enquiries and invitations for speakers. With the Chairman the only member of the community in full-time employment the community is able to have a number of daytime meetings; deepenings as well as neighbourhood lunches, mother-toddler Firesides etc.

In spite of all the effort there have been only 2 declarations this year but the community is anticipating more confirmations.

MORAY

LITTLE BO IS SET TO PEDAL UP SOME AID

Courageous Ride For A Seven-Year-Old

A ██████████ YEAR-OLD little girl will be battling against the elements on Saturday, December 3 — but for a very good reason.

Plucky Bo Hewlett was watching Blue Peter on television as usual one evening when the "WeatherBeater" appeal came on.

So moved was she at the plight of millions of flood, drought and famine victims around the world that she decided she had to do something to help.

And this was not a flash in the pan impulse of charity — for she has gone ahead with her fund-raising plans.

At 11 o'clock in the morning on December 3, Bo accompanied by her parents Sara and Asad Hewlett, will set off on an epic 24-mile bicycle ride. The route for this most courageous journey is along the back roads from her home — Sunnybank, Lein Road, Kingston — to Elgin and back home.

SAFER

"We are taking the back route because, even though it is slightly longer, it is much safer," said Mrs Hewlett.

"And even if it is getting dark by the time we return, we have lights and lots of reflectors."

Bo has already done the journey so she knows she is able to cope with the distance. The last time was in the heat of summer — this time, hopefully, she will not have to face the worst of winter.

Bo is looking desperately for sponsors.

Already she has secured a promise of sponsorship from the Baha'i communities of Banff and Buchan, Moray and Inverness, and

within her first hour of petitioning she collected £30 from people in Kingston.

Reverend D. Cummings of St Giles has promised to sponsor her, and Bo will be sending a form to her granny in Chelmsford.

Fellow villagers of Kingston and Garmouth and Elgin shopkeepers and churchgoers have been asked to support Bo in her effort.

At present £50 has been collected but Bo is hoping for much, much more

AFRICA

The Hewlett family returned from Africa three years ago so they have personal knowledge of the suffering so widespread in the Third World.

Bo's father, who is presently studying computer science at the Moray College of Further Education, was a mobile van driver for the Baha'is in Central Africa, Nigeria and Cameroon, and the family were able to spend some time with the people of those countries and see how hard life was for them.

"Being brought up with Baha'i principles, Bo sees all people, whatever their race or religion as one family," said her mother.

The Blue Peter team are aiming to raise £25,000 in a national campaign of Bring and Buy sales.

Local Baha'is will be doing their part in this effort by holding their own sale on December 10 at 2.00 pm in Garmouth Village Hall.

A Poem by Edith Spence.

Beauty

Flowers in all their beauty,
Their fragrances divine,
Live in perfect harmony,
As one day will mankind.
Baha'u'llah came to tell us this,
United, mankind must be;
The only way to World Peace,
Is, through Love and Unity.

Bo Hewlett of Kingston — Moray raised £176 for an appeal called "Weather Beater" and as a result an article and her photograph appeared in the local newspaper "Northern Scot". Bo's mother Mrs. Sarah Hewlett says:

Bo raised £176 for the appeal, and the article, together with collecting sponsorship, served very well to introduce our family into our new village. The response has been very warm, some people dropping in to say that they agreed with the Baha'i view mentioned in the article. Good relations were established with the press, some receiving Baha'i books, and local radio interviewed Bo and put it out during the week at peak times, and also wished to know of anything else we were doing.

The minister of Elgin church of Scotland spoke to his congregation, knowing we were Baha'is and raised £20 for the appeal.

The Editor of 'Blue Peter' wrote personally thanking Bo, and is being sent a copy of the press article.

This single activity has proved that working in such a way serves the Faith well, for, as Shoghi Effendi pointed out, working with people/ organisations whose aspirations parallel the Faiths', immediately puts one into contact with concerned and receptive people.

International News



CANADA/UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

More than 500 people from 134 countries participated November 4-7 in the eighth annual Conference of the Association for Baha'i Studies, the first such event ever held outside of Canada.

This year's Conference at the Palmer House in Chicago, was privileged to have the presence of the Hand of the Cause of God Dhikrullah Khadem.

A splendid array of Baha'i and non-Baha'i speakers presented scholarly addresses on a wide range of topics within the framework of the Conference themes, "New Dimensions in Development," "Integrating Personal and Social Change," and "The Elimination of Violence as a Prerequisite for World Peace."

Three simultaneous Saturday evening sessions included presentations on "Uses and Abuses of Power," "Arts and Sciences in the New Age," and "Historical Studies on the Baha'i Faith."

The annual Hasan Balyuzi Lecture, named in honour of the Hand of the Cause of God whose scholarly works on the history of the Faith are known to Baha'is all over the world, was delivered Sunday afternoon by Dr Firuz Kazemzadeh, professor of Russian history at Yale University and presently secretary of the U.S. National Spiritual Assembly.

Dr Kazemzadeh's topic was "The Official Soviet Interpretation of Babi-Baha'i History."

Another first for this year's Conference was a Sunday evening session at the Baha'i House of Worship in Wilmette.

That session featured a slide presentation and talk on the history of the Temple entitled "The Dawning Place," presented by Bruce Whitmore, administrator of the House of Worship and secretary of its Activities Committee, followed by an address by Dr Amin Banani, professor of Islamic Studies at the University of California at Los Angeles, entitled "Religion or Foreign Intrigue: The Case of the Babi-Baha'i Movement in Iran."

The non-Baha'i speakers at the Conference were Dr Ervin Laszlo, director of the

United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), and Dr Joanna Macy, an author, community development facilitator and professor at the University of California at Berkeley. Monday's final Conference session was devoted to a panel discussion, "From Ideas to Action," in which oral and written questions from the audience were addressed.

The panelists were Dr Danesh, Dr Laszlo, Dr Macy and Dr Schaefer.

Entertainment at the various Conference sessions was supplied by santour player Kiu Haghighi of Glenview, Illinois; pianist Niuta Isserlin of St. Petersburg, Florida; and the Tahirih Baha'i Chorus from Southern Ontario, Canada.

In all, some 510 people were registered at the Conference. The countries represented were Bermuda, Canada, Colombia, Cyprus, England, Germany, India, Israel, Italy, Kenya, Portugal, Switzerland and the United States.

The Association, which exists to cultivate opportunities for formal presentations of the Baha'i Faith at university and colleges and to promote Baha'i scholarship, was established in 1974 by the National Spiritual Assembly of Canada as the Canadian Association for Studies on the Baha'i Faith in response to a goal of the Five Year Plan given to the Baha'i community by the Universal House of Justice.

In 1981, owing to its worldwide expansion, the association secured the approval of the House of Justice to change its name to the Association for Baha'i Studies.

The Centre for Baha'i Studies, adjacent to the campus of the University of Ottawa, co-ordinates the activities of the Association and serves as a centre for research, instruction and information on the Baha'i studies.

The Association maintains a library within the Centre, collecting literature and studies on the Baha'i Faith (e.g., books, articles, theses and dissertations).

In addition to its annual Conference, the Association holds a number of regional conferences each year which provide opportunities for Baha'is and others who are interested in Baha'i studies to make formal presentations and exchange ideas. The Association's ninth annual Conference, whose theme is "The Vision of Shoghi Effendi," will be held November 2-4, 1984, in Ottawa, Canada.

PANAMA



A member of the Local Spiritual Assembly of the Panama City, Mrs. Raquel de Constante, receives from a postal official a block of commemorative stamps bearing a picture of the Baha'i House of Worship in Panama. The stamp is one of four in a series called "Libertad de Cultos" (freedom of worship) issued by the Panamanian government on 21 October 1983. The other three stamps on the first-day cover show a synagogue, a Catholic church and a mosque, all famed historic sites of Panama. Two other members of the Panama City Assembly to the left of Mrs. de Constante are Mr. Alan Pringle and Mr. Verisimo Castillo.

FRANCE

The first Sunday of October at a hotel in the city of Nancy, about a hundred persons attended a harpsichord concert by Olga Imperatori-Lorne, a Baha'i whose performances are designed to subtly proclaim the Faith. She performs on a beautiful white instrument on which a multicoloured bird is painted. When finished playing, the artist speaks of the bird, saying that it represents mankind, its two wings being science and religion.

The concert in Nancy was a lively one, with Olga introducing each piece on the programme, telling about the composers, their epoch, the music of the 18th century, and the messianic expectations of the 19th century. This led naturally into discussion of the Faith. She invited the audience to see the instrument at close range and to ask questions of her individually.

On the following day the newspaper "L'Est Republicain" published a favourable review, praising the recital and saying: "The Baha'i group of Nancy quite obviously achieved its cultural and spiritual objective".

IVORY COAST AND MALI

On United Nations Day, 24 October, the Baha'i community of Ivory Coast sponsored a public lecture and Baha'i book exhibit at the National Library in Abidjan, in cooperation with the Resident Representative of the United Nations. The event was strongly supported by Mr Usher Assouan, distinguished citizen of the Ivory Coast, a former diplomat of that country to the United Nations who is currently Mayor of the Commune of Cocody (Abidjan). An audience composed mostly of high-ranking officials showed their desire to know about the Faith. Counsellor Kassimi Fofana delivered an eloquent address in French and ably handled the question and answer period that followed. The Guest speaker, Mr Assouan, opened and closed the meeting with remarks which showed his great appreciation for the Faith. He mentioned the important work of the Baha'i International Community at the United Nations, and expressed his own view that nothing positive can be accomplished without addressing the spiritual aspect, and that he is in full agreement with the principles of the Faith with respect to the harmony of science, reason and religion.

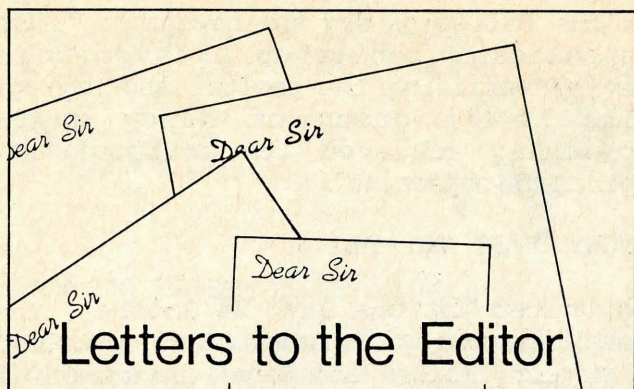
The musical talents of Ranz Casu, (Mrs Jean-Christophe Casu), who sang before and after the lecture, were much appreciated.

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Shahrazad Jamalabadi, a young Baha'i from Trinidad and Tobago, was among a group of students who met last September 28 with His Excellency Sir Ellis Clarke, the President of Trinidad and Tobago, as part of a school social studies project.

Miss Jamalabadi served as captain of a team of seven students who talked with Mr Clarke for more than one and one-half hours.

Afterward, she described the President as "excellent in every point of view," and Mr Clarke wrote to Miss Jamalabadi, saying that she had conducted the interview quite effectively.



Dear Editor,

I would like to share with you news of an enjoyable and useful Area Convention (Area 21b). It was a very full day and particularly busy for the host LSA of Elmbridge. But the outcome was fulfilling - I, for one, certainly left with a feeling of hope, determination and joy. Our votes were cast mid-morning before the Friends had become weary of suggestions. This was a good idea because it meant that the Friends could put forward ideas without feeling that they were attracting undue attention to themselves.

A Bring & Buy Sale for the Capital Projects Fund was also very well organized and it followed directly after the end of Convention. Elmbridge LSA certainly wasted no time. At about 7:00 o'clock there was an evening meal followed by entertainment. A deep feeling of fellowship gradually took over all who were present. I feel that it was this particular part of the day which made it so different to previous Conventions. Thanks to the NSA who suggested the day should end with a 'social' and all credit to the host LSA of Elmbridge who obeyed the NSA, because the result was uplifting.

Every year the Friends wonder how they will get to know members of other communities. This year we had a good start for next year's Convention and already some arrangements have been made to this end.

S Shirinzadeh-Finch
Wandsworth

Dear Baha'i Friends:

My family and I have been pioneering here in Iceland for 5 years now. I myself used to live in Britain for 20 years and decided to move here after coming here for a short travel teaching visit.

It occurred to me how close Iceland is, in fact to Britain and how easy and

relatively cheap it is to come here, either by boat or plane. Yet it is very rare that we get Baha'is visiting our rather isolated community.

We are having our summer school this year from 4th-11th of August and would be very happy to see some Baha'is from such a close community. Anyone who comes will be warmly welcome and can be sure of an unforgettable experience.

Contrary to popular belief Iceland is not a land of ice but a country whose beauty is indeed dazzling, and it does have a summer!

If anyone is interested in coming please let us know and we will give you all the information you require and also tell you of cheap ways to get here.

With warmest Baha'i greetings,
Shahram Firoozmand

P O Box 204

Neskaupstad, Iceland

TO MY DEAREST "FELLOW BELIEVERS IN THE
CAUSE OF BAHU'U'LLAH"

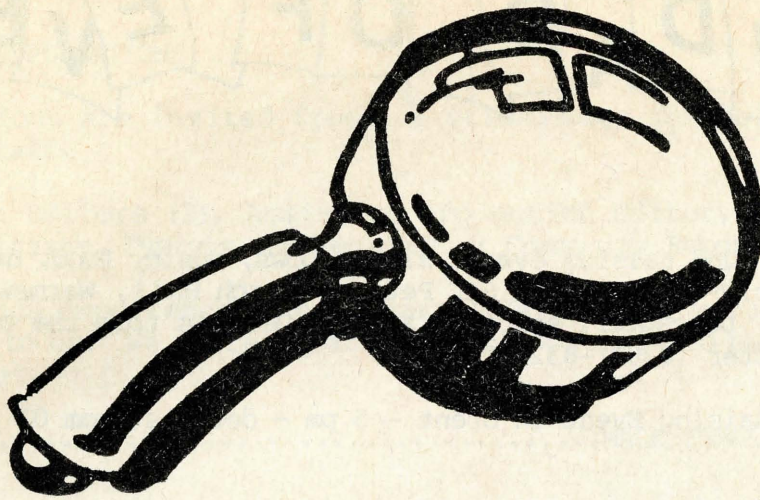
"OUR FREEDOM"

Do you realize what freedom we have? Do you just realize the extent of freedom we now have in the West? The freedom of consulting in an LSA meeting, the freedom of praying together, seeing each other anytime we feel like it, the freedom of walking in the streets with no fear, the freedom of finding the thirsty souls for the teachings of Baha'u'llah, proclaiming the Faith, sharing our happiness with our friends.

The freedom of going to school, to work, and at the end of the day going to sleep in peace, in one piece. The freedom of going to conferences, conventions, getting an article printed in the Local Gazette. Do you realize how much freedom we have? The freedom to live, to breathe happily, the freedom of travel-teaching, pioneering, visiting the Holy Land, and helping towards buying a building as a Baha'i Centre in the Shetland Islands.

None of which our beloved friends in Iran have, yet they are giving whatever else they have, so let us do more of these things. Let us really be with them, united in sacrificing and giving as we should be. Let us make more sacrifices, let us give more and more....until it really hurts.

Peyman Deravi
Hackney



ITS NO GOOD LOOKING AT THE FINE PRINT
YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT YOU OUGHT
TO ATTEND!

NATIONAL CONVENTION
ROYAL HALL
HARROGATE

27, 28 & 29 APRIL

BOOK YOUR ACCOMMODATION NOW

Please note that there is no hostel accommodation

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

APRIL

1 Grand Fund raising event, slide shows, music, food, dancing all for only £1. Venue is St. Peter's Church Hall, Warmsworth Rd, Balby, Doncaster, starting at 6pm. Details from the secretary Doncaster (0302)-832130

15 Fund-Raising Event in Brent - 5 pm - details from 01 904 4265

19-23 Spring School. Topic "Daring to be different". Repeat of the Winter School at Charlbury Youth Hostel.

MAY

2 Picnic at Chatsworth House Park in Derbyshire - 3 p.m. Details from Chesterfield 205273.

6 Day School on 'Walking the Spiritual Path with Practical Feet' - 10.30 a.m./5 p.m. at The Friends Meeting House, Saltergate, Chesterfield. Details from Chesterfield 205273.

JULY

21-25 Spanish Summer School, Valencia

28-4 Scottish Summer School. Details to follow.

28-1 Spanish Children's School, Valencia

AUGUST

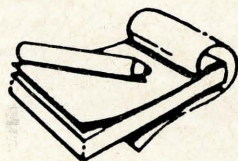
18-25 First Welsh Summer School.

9-12 Junior Youth Summer School, 29 Newtondale, Sutton Park, Hull For boys 8-11, aim is to give deeper understanding of the Faith. Outings and involvement in local Baha'i community.

11-15 Spanish Summer School

26-1 Second Welsh Summer School. Details to follow.

26-2 French Summer School in Plateau D'Assy. Details from Mme Daghighi, 11 avenue Tardat, 49000 Angers, France.



Please Note

PLEASE NOTE The dates of the Spring School given in the last issue of the Baha'i News Service were incorrect. The correct dates are 22 - 26 April.

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

Applications are invited from the friends for the following posts on the Journal Staff.

Assistant Editors (2), Assistant Production Editor, Staff Writers, Staff Graphic Artists, Typists and Regional or Community Reporters.

No previous experience is necessary. Enthusiasm and reliability are more precious to us. We regret that it is not possible to pay staff but expenses will be met.

NAME.....MALE/FEMALE

ADDRESS.....
.....
.....
.....
.....TEL:.....

POSITION APPLIED FOR:.....

REASONS FOR APPLYING:

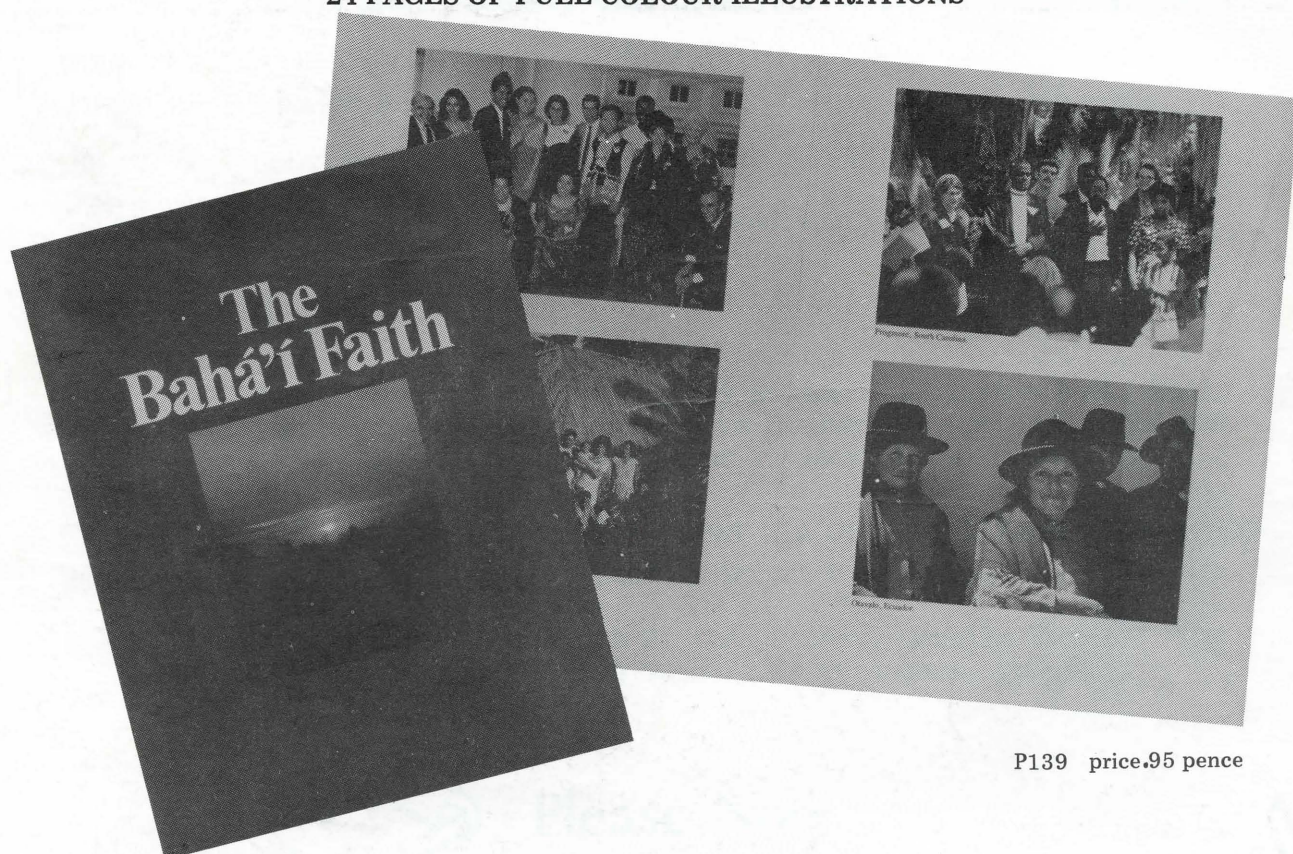
QUESTIONS YOU WOULD LIKE TO ASK THE EDITORIAL STAFF:



PLEASE SEND TO THE EDITOR BAHAI JOURNAL, 27 RUTLAND GATE, LONDON SW7

The Bahá'í Faith Teaching Booklet

A DIGNIFIED AND BEAUTIFUL PRESENTATION
OF THE MAIN TEACHINGS OF THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH
24 PAGES OF FULL COLOUR ILLUSTRATIONS



P139 price.95 pence

The Bahá'í Publishing Trust

6 MOUNT PLEASANT, OAKHAM, LEICESTER. LE15 6HU. ENGLAND