

THE HOME FRONT

A NEWS BULLETIN

No. 35.

April 1963.

"The Lord hath ordained that in every city a House of Justice be established wherein shall gather counsellors to the number of Baha It behoveth them to be the trusted ones of the Merciful among men and to regard themselves as the guardians appointed of God for all that dwell on earth. It is incumbent upon them to take counsel together and to have regard for the interests of the servants of God, for His sake, even as they regard their own interests, and to choose that which is meet and seemly. Thus hath the Lord your God commanded you. Beware lest ye put away that which is clearly revealed in His Tablet. Fear God, O ye that perceive."

Baha' u'llah

SPECIAL GUIDANCE FOR LOCAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES

Secretaries, please take immediate action

I. THE IMPORTANCE OF HOLDING RIDVAN MEETINGS ON THE 21ST APRIL EACH YEAR

Local Spiritual Assemblies are formed or perpetuated only on one special day each year, that day is the first day of Ridvan, April 21st. namely from after sunset April 20th.

to sunset April 21st. It is of vital importance that the Ridvan meetings be held during these 24 hours for they cannot be held at any other time. Assemblies continuing in existence should be very careful to hold their elections (or where there are exactly nine adult Baha'is, re-form their Assembly) on that particular day.

The sacred nature of Baha'i elections cannot be over-emphasized. Elections should, of course, be conducted in a spirit of prayer, each believer turning for guidance to the Abha Kingdom.

The voting need be in no way hurried but each person should be given ample time to record his vote quietly and prayerfully.

In writing about the election of local Spiritual Assemblies, Shoghi Effendi said:

"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.

"Pending its establishment, and to ensure uniformity throughout the East and throughout 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, be declared on that day."

II. PERPETUATION OF AN EXISTING LOCAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY

Once a local Spiritual Assembly has been formed it is perpetuated from year to year providing there are nine or more adult Baha'is in that place on the first day of Ridvan.

1) Election of a local Spiritual Assembly where there are more than nine adult Baha'is

Where there are more than nine adult Baha'is an election is held on April 21st. Everyone should make a

special effort to be present at the Ridvan meeting because the election of a new Spiritual Assembly is one of the most important things that can happen in any town or city, and is a sacred moment. If it is quite impossible to attend the Ridvan meeting, one's vote should be sent by post to the Secretary. Baha'i elections are by secret ballot, so ballot papers sent by post should be placed first in a plain envelope with no indication made of the name of the sender either on the envelope or on the ballot paper, and that envelope should be sealed. The sealed envelope should then be placed in another envelope which is addressed to the Secretary, and this should have the name of the sender clearly written on the back and "BALLOT" in the left-hand corner on the front. The ballot paper should be posted in time to reach the Secretary not later than the morning of the day on which the election is to take place. (If two envelopes are not used this does not inviolate the vote).

The envelopes containing the postal ballots are not opened until the friends present at the Ridvan meeting have recorded their own votes, using the ballot papers they will have brought along to the meeting. The envelopes containing the postal votes are then opened and those votes added to the other ballot papers.

Before the voting commences, tellers should be appointed by the friends present at the meeting, and they are responsible for collecting and counting the votes.

When the votes have been counted and the members of the new local Spiritual Assembly are known, they should each sign the statement sent by the National Spiritual Assembly confirming that they are the duly elected local Spiritual Assembly of that particular town, in a similar way to the "declaration" which is signed by the newly declared Assembly. This statement is then sent in duplicate to the National Assembly for sealing and the sealed copy is returned to the local Spiritual Assembly for safe keeping.

In relation to voting for oneself, the beloved Guardian has said:-

"This is entirely a matter of conscience; if the individual feels for some reason justified in voting for himself, he is free to do so."

(Principles of Baha'i Administration, p.59).

Each ballot paper must be filled in with exactly nine names of the members of the local community, more or less than nine names invalidates the whole ballot paper.

Where there is a larger local community, the nine believers receiving the highest number of votes become the members of the local Spiritual Assembly; this is called a "plurality" vote as distinct from a "majority" vote. A "plurality" vote means that those with the highest numbers of votes are elected irrespective of the number of people who voted. A "majority" vote means that the members elected must have been voted for by more than half of the electorate, and this form of voting is used when the Officers of the Assembly are elected (see below).

2) Ridvan meeting where there are exactly nine adult members.

Where there are exactly nine adult Baha'is in the community, they hold a Ridvan meeting, but obviously no election of the Assembly is necessary.

3) Election of L.S.A. Officers.

The election of Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer is by secret ballot. They are elected by "majority" vote. "Majority" means more than half, so that the "majority" of a local Assembly is five, which is more than half of nine. This means that each Officer elected must receive not less than five votes. If necessary, re-elections must be held until that majority is obtained by any one person.

A new piece of paper is used for the election of each of the Officers, and if a re-vote is necessary - or even more than one re-vote - in order to secure a majority, the voting continues on new pieces of paper each time until one person obtains the necessary five votes or more for that particular Office.

The Assembly chooses from amongst its own members one to act as "teller" for these elections of Officers before the elections themselves begin and the "Teller" is responsible for counting the votes and reporting the results immediately to the local Assembly.

The local Spiritual Assembly continuing in existence (as is the case this year with the 49 local Spiritual Assemblies in the British Isles) does not need to elect its Officers at the Ridvan meeting on the 21st April. If Officers are not elected then, however, they must be elected at the first ordinary meeting of the Assembly, in which case the existing Officers can continue to act until the first ordinary meeting.

Other Offices such as that of Librarian, can, if needed, be filled by election at a future meeting of the local Assembly.

Local Spiritual Assemblies must inform the National Spiritual Assembly immediately of the names of the Assembly members and the names of the Officers of the local Spiritual Assembly.

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I N P E R S P E C T I V E

When was the Old Testament Book of Zechariah written? When did the Prophet Zechariah speak with the Angel Messenger? How many thousands of years ago? What did he relate that is so important to us?

He said: "And THIS shall come to pass, if you will diligently obey the Voice of the Lord your God." (Ch:6 v.15). What is THIS that shall come to pass?

"Behold, the man whose name is the Branch and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the Temple of the Lord." (v.12). "And they that are afar off shall come and build in the Temple of the Lord, and ye shall know that the Lord of Hosts hath sent me unto you." (v.15).

The beloved Branch of Baha'u'llah began the building of the Temple, in the plans of the Administrative Order. And are not WE "they that are afar off" who "shall build in the Temple of the Lord" - the International House of Justice upon the Holy Mount?

And to build it there must be the requisite parts of foundation everywhere.

Can we grasp the magnitude of what is given to us?

You and I, within the next few days or so will witness the actual fulfilment of this ancient Prophecy of Zechariah. We, who by the Grace of God, have been called to serve the Faith of "the two appointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth" (Ch:4 v.14) whose ears have been opened to hear, and whose eyes have been opened to see this fore-ordained Day. It is almost impossible to grasp, that we have been given an invitation to this great Feast of fulfilment.

Shall we be like the invited Guests to the wedding feast of Christ and be too busy to attend? Too busy to accept God's invitation to build this "Temple of the Branch"?

Arise and go forth, forsaking all else, to put toil in the building - no others have this invitation - and complete the foundation of these Isles, these 49 firm foundation stones, these 49 Local Houses of Justice which in only a few days must bear the weight of the mighty Temple of the Lord.

"And THIS shall come to pass, IF ye diligently obey".

WILL YOU ?

We are indebted to Naomi Long for this inspiring contribution.

GOALS
of the
TEN YEAR CRUSADE

The National Assembly and the National Teaching Committee have been working energetically to ensure the filling of the gaps by Ridvan - and we would like to record here our deep gratitude to all those pioneers who have responded so promptly to the various appeals. The plans now made should ensure the maintenance of all the Assemblies at Ridvan.

Additional pioneer offers, however, are still urgently needed in case an emergency should arise in any Local Spiritual Assembly. In this last year of the Crusade, every effort must be exerted so that all Assemblies are firmly assured.

If you are able to pioneer for a short period from Ridvan onwards - or for a longer period within a few months after Ridvan - please get in touch immediately with the National Secretary, at 27, Rutland Gate, Knightsbridge, S.W.7. Tel: KNightsbridge 2566.

P I O N E E R

Strange street,
Strange faces
and yet familiarity,
since all roads lead to God
and all men are His children.

Each problem
a boulder on the path;
each prayer
a remover of difficulties.

Loneliness amid the multitude,
yet the companionship of God
as nowhere else.

Through all Time
have men experienced
this great adventure,
drawing their roots
from fleeting things
and sowing them
deep in a love of God,
on strange soils,
as bidden by His Messengers.

So, in this greatest Day,
the pattern has recurred,
and thus my fellow travellers of the light,
I make my way abroad
to spread the Glory.

by Cherry Viveash

V I S I T O R S

It has been the aim of the N.T.C. during the last year especially, to encourage the friends to visit each other - from one community to another - to bring the lone believer into the activity of a community - with the express purpose of getting to know each other and to help in teaching the Cause.

In this last "Home Front" of the year, we would like to say a special word of thanks to those friends who have continued to travel many a difficult mile through snow (shall we ever forget our last winter of the Ten Year Crusade?) rain and shine, to give talks at public meetings and firesides - some of them regularly week by week - others giving up their precious week-ends from study or work - others taking the advantage of business trips and extra holidays. There can be no doubt that this inter-change of visitors has contributed to a great measure, to the consolidation of the community. Those who have travelled have by reason of their study to give talks, deepened in their knowledge and understanding of the Faith - those who have received visitors have gathered strength and encouragement for their teaching efforts.

We now look forward to visitors of another kind - those who will be in our midst, perhaps in our country for the first time of their lives, on the occasion of the Most Great Jubilee. Already offers of teaching help have come from friends from overseas who have already arrived, and offers from those who plan to stay some weeks after the Congress. The N.T.C. will do all it can to spread these visitors as widely as possible. It may well be, however, that Assemblies will have little notice of their arrival. In order to help the N.T.C. in its planning, will you please keep us informed of your own activities (dates of firesides, if these have been changed) so that we can disperse the visitors to the best advantage of all concerned.

F O R S A L E

Birmingham L.S.A. have a small supply of the Study Course based on the text of "Eaha'u'llah and the New Era".

Copies, price 3/7d. may be obtained from:-

George Rowley,
141 Cherrywood Road,
Birmingham 9.

All Baha'is should possess a copy of the:-

"CONSOLIDATION AND TEACHING MANUAL"

Obtainable from the N.T.C. Secretary,

Address: "Green Tiles",
London Road,
Twyford,
Berks.

Price 2/6d.

<u>Holy Days</u>	April 21	- The first day of Ridvan.
	April 29	- The ninth day of Ridvan.
	May 2	- The twelfth day of Ridvan.
	May 23	- Declaration of the Bab.
	May 29	- Ascension of Baha'u'llah.

Convention 25th/26th May, at the Library Theatre, Kensington,
London.

May 11/12 - Youth Weekend in South Wales.
June 7/9 - Lyme Park Weekend School, Cheshire.
Jul.13/27 - Summer School at Dalston Hall, Nr. Carlisle.
Aug.23/31 - Summer School at Harlech, N. Wales.
Oct.12/13 - Weekend School at Dalston Hall, Nr. Carlisle.
Nov.16/17 - Weekend School at Avon Tyrrell,
Nr. Bournemouth.

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