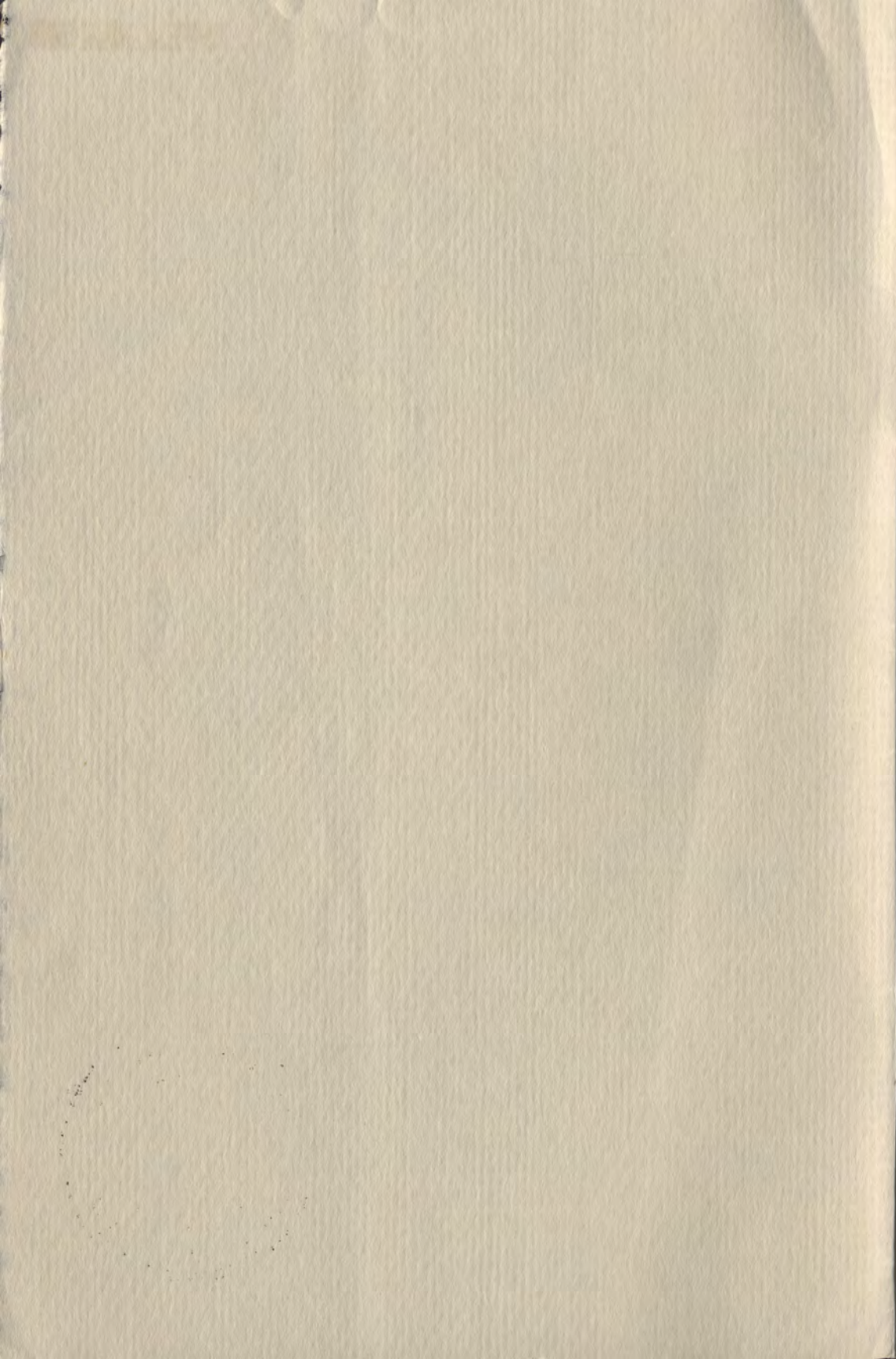


DAWN OF WORLD PEACE

J U B I L E E

COMMEMORATING THE PUBLIC
DECLARATION OF BAHÁ'U'LLAH
FOUNDER OF THE BAHÁ'Í WORLD
FAITH * APRIL 21 - MAY 2, 1863 *



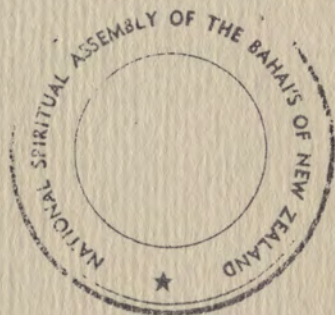
COMMEMORATING THE PUBLIC DECLARATION OF BAHÁ'U'LLAH
FOUNDER OF THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH * APRIL 21 - MAY 2, 1963 *

DAWN
OF
WORLD PEACE

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SELECTIONS FROM THE WRITINGS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

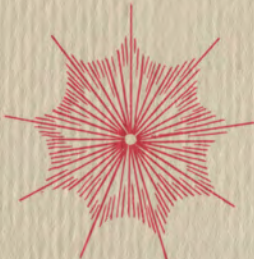
Great indeed is this Day! The allusions made to it in all the sacred Scriptures as the Day of God attest its greatness. The soul of every prophet of God, of every Divine Messenger, hath thirsted for this wondrous Day. All the divers kindreds of the earth have, likewise, yearned to attain it. (1)

The time fore-ordained unto the peoples and kindreds of the earth is now come. The promises of God, as recorded in the holy Scriptures, have all been fulfilled. (2)

There can be no doubt whatever that the peoples of the world, of whatever race or religion, derive their inspiration from one heavenly Source, and are the subjects of one God. The difference between the ordinances under which they abide should be attributed to the varying requirements and exigencies of the age in which they were revealed. (3)

Every age hath its own problem, and every soul its particular aspiration. The remedy the world needeth in its present-day afflictions can never be the same as that which a subsequent age may require. Be anxiously concerned with the needs of the age ye live in, and center your deliberations on its exigencies and requirements. (4)

That which the Lord hath ordained as the sovereign remedy and mightiest instrument for the healing of all the world is the union of all its peoples in one universal Cause, one Common Faith. (5)



DAWN OF WORLD PEACE

ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO in a garden near Baghdad a group of people gathered around the majestic figure of a man and heard Him declare that He was the Promised One of all religions. Their hearts were full beyond measure as they crowded near Him—of a joy hitherto unknown to them as they felt the radiance of His presence, the divine authority of His words—and of sorrow too, for they knew that He Who had already been exiled from His native land of Persia would soon be banished further, from their midst. The extent of that banishment, the cruelties yet to be heaped upon Him, and His final imprisonment in the Turkish penal colony of Akka, in the Holy Land, they could not foresee.

Nor could they comprehend the full import of that declaration, presaged to a whole world as it were, that an old order, an old civilization would soon be rolled up and a new one spread out in its stead. The long-awaited era of peace had dawned and a new race of men would be

raised up throughout the entire planet to usher in a new world order, foretold by the prophet Daniel, and envisioned by Isaiah: "*Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.*"

He was known to them as Bahá'u'lláh (the Glory of God). In His homeland He had been Mirzá Husayn 'Alí, from an illustrious family in Tihrán, who had sacrificed wealth and worldly position in the path of the Báb. The youthful Báb had been publicly martyred some years earlier in Tabríz for teaching throughout Persia that a great World Teacher, the Promised One of all religions, would soon appear.

He was the One foretold by the Báb, Bahá'u'lláh told the people assembled in His midst. Moreover, He was the return of the Christ-Spirit, and the Lord of Hosts. His coming fulfilled the Messianic hopes in the scriptures of Hindu, Zoroastrian and Buddhist, as well as Moslem, Christian and Jew. He was that Messenger of God Who would teach all men to live in peace.

It was April of 1863 and for a few days life seemed to be suspended for those who were in the presence of Bahá'u'lláh in the Garden of Ridván (Paradise), as it was later known. Yet in a few decades His Message would flash like lightning to the West where the assembled delegates at the first World Parliament of Religions in Chicago, in 1893, would hear of the teaching of this Prince of Peace through the report of a Christian missionary from Syria. Shortly before that event, the distinguished British orientalist of Cambridge University, Professor E. G. Browne, was to seek His presence in Akka and hear Him proclaim His mission: "*That all nations should become one in faith and all men as brothers; that the bonds of affection and unity between the sons of men should be strengthened; that diversity of religion should cease, and differences of race be annulled . . . so shall it be; these fruitless strifes, these ruinous wars shall pass away, and the 'Most Great Peace' shall come . . .*"

"No need to ask in whose presence I stood," Professor Browne recorded, "as I bowed myself before one who is the object of a devotion and love which kings might envy . . ."

NOW, IN APRIL OF 1963, Bahá'is from over 250 countries, islands and dependencies will gather in London for five days to celebrate the centenary of Bahá'u'lláh's historic declaration in Baghdad. It is the greatest festival ever to be held by the followers of Bahá'u'lláh. From the East and the West, from all continents, from all religious and cultural backgrounds, they will assemble to bear witness to the establishment of the community that bears His name—the Bahá'í World Community.

There will be natives from Africa and the South Seas. There will be American businessmen, Indians from North and South America, Australian aborigines, Arabs and Jews. Rich and poor, scholarly and unlearned will meet and celebrate together in unity, for each has comprehended Bahá'u'lláh's teaching of the unity of God and His Prophets: truth progressively revealed by His successive Messengers through millenniums of time. They have found a new spiritual vitality in a life lived above barriers of race, creed and nationality, for Bahá'u'lláh has said: "*Let your vision be world-embracing rather than confined to yourself . . . The earth is one country and mankind its citizens.*" Everyone participating in this great Festival has heeded Bahá'u'lláh's admonition to open his mind and heart and seek independently for truth, knowing that the Day has come "*when the knowledge of God would cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.*" Each one has contributed his time and his talents, according to his capacity, toward planting the banner of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh across the entire planet.

HERE WILL BE SOME WHO GATHER IN LONDON, or in other cities and villages where this great Jubilee will be celebrated, who will personally remember 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the Son of Bahá'u'lláh. All will recall the unique function He filled as the perfect exemplar of His Father's teachings and as the Center of His Covenant to preserve the unity of the Faith. Some were present when He laid the cornerstone of the Bahá'í House of Worship on the shores of Lake Michigan at Wilmette, Illinois. Others heard Him speak in churches, synagogues, universities and peace societies as He journeyed through Europe and across America. The great and the humble sought His presence and listened to Him expound on the universal principles of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh. In America, scientist Luther Burbank declared: "Bahá'í is more truly the religion of peace than any other!"

In England, Dr. J. Estlin Carpenter introduced 'Abdu'l-Bahá at Oxford; and later, with a prescience which perhaps he himself could not fully evaluate, he wrote in his book, *Comparative Religions*: ". . . has Persia, in the midst of her miseries, given birth to a religion which will go round the world?"

Patiently, powerfully, 'Abdu'l-Bahá enunciated Bahá'u'lláh's principles of world order: the elimination of all forms of prejudice; the need for a world government based upon a federated structure; a world court whose decisions would be mandatory; an international police force as an arm of world government; the equality of men and women; an international auxiliary language to be taught everywhere; the essential harmony of science and religion. These principles and many others must be implemented voluntarily by the nations, if world conflagrations, increasingly catastrophic, were to be averted, 'Abdu'l-Bahá explained to the multitudes who listened. Sadly He knew that only a handful would begin the vast work of laying the spiritual pattern for peace. "Make a beginning," He said. "Surely you will succeed, for God is with you."

Those who listened with lifted hearts, recognizing Bahá'u'lláh's teaching as the Word of God, could not know then where their Faith and their labors would take them.

It remained for Shoghi Effendi Rabbani, grandson of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, appointed by Him in His Will and Testament to be the Guardian of the Faith, to build the institutions throughout the world through which the spirit of the new Faith could flow. With his guidance, Bahá'ís have developed the administrative framework from a pattern revealed in the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh. Under his leadership, a series of plans were launched, culminating with a Ten-Year World Crusade initiated in April, 1953. Gathering momentum, the Faith has in this last decade established Bahá'í communities throughout the world, more than doubling the progress in all of the decades preceding it. The hundreds of racial and ethnic groups represented within its circle of fellowship, the literature translated into 296 languages and tribal tongues, the Houses of Worship erected in five continents, the fifty-six National Assemblies elected—these are some of the goals delineated by Shoghi Effendi in 1953. These are the victories to be celebrated by Bahá'ís at their great Jubilee in London, where they will gather at the grave of Shoghi Effendi who passed on in 1957 and is buried there. The crowning victory will be the election of the International House of Justice, the supreme administrative body of the Bahá'ís, to be elected in April by members of the fifty-six national assemblies.

ESSENTIALLY, THIS WORLD JUBILEE is the celebration of one hundred years of peace. This may seem strange, looking back at the secular history of the world. The past hundred years has been a turbulent period for both East and West; but it has marked the virtual end of slavery, and through it all the dignity and worth of every human soul is being upraised.

Some years after leaving the garden of Ridván, Bahá'u'lláh, knowing that the minds of the masses of mankind were fettered by ecclesiastical authority and political despotism, wrote to the kings and religious leaders of the world outlining His healing message for mankind. He called upon such powerful rulers as Kaiser Wilhelm I, Napoleon III, the Czar of Russia, the Sultan of Turkey, the Shah of Persia, the Pope and other religious leaders, to establish a World Tribunal through which the peace of the world could be secured. He warned them of the sudden collapse of their dynasties if they ignored the divine summons, of the suffering in store for the nations. His warning was either ignored or belittled. Men and nations chose to take the slower, harder road to peace, not knowing that it was a divine summons and that the Word of the Prophet of God is not returned void. Since the letters to the kings, the nations have painfully worked their way toward the unity proclaimed by Bahá'u'lláh: *"The well-being of mankind, its peace and security, are unattainable unless and until its unity is firmly established. This unity can never be achieved so long as the counsels which the Pen of the Most High hath revealed are suffered to pass unheeded."*

To Bahá'ís, this century has marked the first glimmer of the dawn of a new age. In His day, Moses could not expand the boundaries of human solidarity beyond a tribal concept of unity. Christ "came not to send peace, but a sword," for He clearly foresaw the generations of history stretched out ahead in a long, violent path. He brought a personal salvation and peace for each individual soul who must travel that road.

Today the principle of peace and of world order is no vague hope for the distant future. It is the law of a new age, revealed by the Prophet of God. To the Bahá'ís gathering in London "the earth is but one country, and mankind its citizens."

— By Eunice Braun



INTERNATIONAL OBSERVANCE
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