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ADELBERT MÜHLSCHLEGEL

1897-1980

On 16 October 1920 'Abdu'l-Bahá addressed the following Tablet to Adelbert Mühlischlegel:

O thou son of the Kingdom! Thy letter hath been received. It was like unto a bag of musk. When I opened it, the fragrance of the love of God was perceived. It is my hope that thy rivulet may develop into a sea and surge with the breezes of divine guidance, casting a wave to the East and another to the West.

Be thou deeply thankful to thy teacher and show unto her heartfelt and spiritual gratitude, because it was she who caused thee to hear the divine call and it was through her that thou didst attain to eternal grace. Thou wert earthly and thou becamest heavenly; thou wert in darkness and thou didst attain illumination; thou wert of the world of matter and thou becamest divine, and thou didst obtain a portion and share of the eternal bestowal. Be filled with happiness and derive joy from the melody of the Supreme Concourse!

It is my hope that thou wilt follow in the path of Bahá'u'lláh. Thine honoured wife will be favoured at the threshold of Oneness and looked upon with the eyes of the merciful Lord. Upon thee be the Glory of the All-Glorious.

This hope of 'Abdu'l-Bahá that Adelbert Mühlischlegel would walk in the path of Bahá'u'lláh came true and he continued in this path devotedly to the end of his life. He was born on 16 June 1897 in Berlin. His father was a military doctor in the service of the King of Wurttemberg, which influenced young Adelbert's choice of profession. His mother was the daughter of the pastor of Biberach, and she passed on to her son the longing for spiritual values. Adelbert described his childhood, part of which was spent in Stuttgart, as a cheerful one. He lived for many years in a house with a large garden. His parents gave him much love and attention. He had the example of his mother's pious and radiant soul as well as his father's discipline and encouragement in sports. In addition, he had a charming little sister who later emigrated to eastern Europe and accepted the Faith there.

During World War I Adelbert served in the medical corps and struggled to harmonize within himself the hard facts of medicine with the longing for spiritual enlightenment. His medical studies took him to Freiburg, Greifswald and Tübingen. He grew increasingly convinced that a new era was coming into being and he became a true seeker. In 1920 he received a letter from his mother in which she said that she had found a new and universal Cause, the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh. He studied the few texts which were available at that time, realized that it was the truth he had been searching for, and accepted the Faith.

In 1922 he opened his first medical practice, in Stuttgart. There followed a time of inner struggle to harmonize his profession and his private life with the Teachings. He participated in the community life of Stuttgart, gave talks and wrote a melodrama for the third 'Bahá'í Congress', held in September 1924. Two years later he married Herma Weidle. They had two girls and three boys of whom one died in early childhood. Herma was a radiant mother and Adelbert's close companion in all his Bahá'í activities until she was called to the Abhá Kingdom in 1964.¹ They had the great privilege of making a pilgrimage together in 1936 and of being in the presence of Shoghi Effendi who walked alone with Adelbert for a quarter of an hour in the gardens.

Then came the time in 1937 when the Faith was prohibited in Germany. Throughout the years of the Second World War Adelbert remained with his family in Stuttgart, as a doctor. Their apartment was bombed. In 1945, in their new home, Adelbert and Herma created a true centre for Bahá'í activities and, in addition, a place to which many young Iranian Bahá'ís turned upon their arrival in Germany. A warm atmosphere full of humour enveloped everyone. If any material difficulty arose, as was not unusual in those post-

¹ See 'In Memoriam', *The Bahá'í World*, vol. XIV, p. 367.

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Picture in Upper Left Corner with the Caption: Adelbert Mühlischlegel

war years, Adelbert would compose a song making light of the problem. He continued to provide translations of Bahá'í literature and widened his

working knowledge of a number of European languages. He wrote many articles on Bahá'í subjects that appeared in various publications. For many years — and until January 1958 — he served as a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Germany and Austria, and was often its chairman.

In February 1952 Adelbert Mühlischlegel was appointed a Hand of the Cause of God and from 1959 devoted his entire time to service to the Faith. In 1957 a profound spiritual experience deeply affected him, preparing him for a life of complete dedication to service to Bahá'u'lláh. In that year, when the beloved Guardian passed away, Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum asked Adelbert to wash the body of Shoghi Effendi before internment. This experience is best described in his own words:

Something new happened to me in that hour that I cannot, even after a few days, speak of, but I can mention the wisdom and love that I felt pour over me. In that room — which to worldly eyes would have appeared so different — there was a tremendous spiritual force which I have only felt in my life in the holy Shrines. My first impression was the contrast between the body left behind and the majestic, transfigured face, a soul-stirring picture of the joyous victory of the eternal over the transient. My second impression, as I prayed and thought and carefully did what I had to do, was that in this degree of consecration to the work of God I should work all my life, and mankind should work a thousand years, in order to construct "the Kingdom" on earth; and my third thought was, as I washed every member of his body and anointed it, that I thanked those beloved hands which had worked and written to establish the Covenant, those feet that had walked for us, that mouth that had spoken to us, that head that had thought for us, and I prayed and meditated and supplicated that in the short time left to me, the members of my body might hasten to follow in his path of service; and my last thought was of my own distress because I felt how unworthy my hands were to anoint that blessed brow with attar-of-rose as the Masters of old were wont to do to their pupils; and yet what privileges, what duties fall to us, the living, to watch over what is past and mortal, be it ever so exalted. A great deal of mercy, love, and wisdom were hidden in this hour.¹

The Hand of the Cause Adelbert Mühlischlegel was one of the Chief Stewards of the Cause who guided it through the dark corridor from 1957 to 1963 when the Universal House of Justice was elected. During this time he visited many European countries, assisting in increasing the number of National Spiritual Assemblies there from three, in 1953, to sixteen, in 1963. In 1958 Dr. Mühlischlegel and his wife pioneered from Stuttgart to various centres and finally to Tübingen where Herma passed away in 1964 following a long and severe illness during which she was cared for by her husband. A shining light had left this world to continue her services in another realm, and to assist her dear husband in this one.

After the death of his wife in 1964 Dr. Mühlischlegel moved to Vienna to help consolidate this still struggling national com-

1 See The Bahá'í World, vol. XIII, pp. 218-219.

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munity. The secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly was Ursula Kohler who, a year later, became his wife and close collaborator. Then in 1970, when Switzerland needed help to open one of its French-speaking cantons, Dr. Mühlischlegel registered in the University of Fribourg in order to obtain his residence permit. Soon a healthy community was established in Fribourg with his help and that of his wife. From Austria and Switzerland his travels in Europe continued. When, in 1968, the Hands of the Cause were freed to serve on a world-wide basis through the establishment of the Continental Boards of Counsellors, Dr. Mühlischlegel made his first trip to other continents. In 1969, at the request of the Universal House of Justice, he journeyed to Asia, visiting Persia, India, West Pakistan (now Bangladesh)[sic] and Nepal.

Having achieved his purpose in Switzerland, Dr. Mühlischlegel and his wife moved in 1974, at the suggestion of the House of Justice, to Hofheim, Germany, very close to the Mother Temple of Europe. Again their home became a centre of Bahá'í hospitality enriched by the great wisdom of Dr. Mühlischlegel who shared his knowledge with the visiting friends. In addition, he travelled to Africa in 1971 and 1972, and to South America in 1975. During these long trips he was accompanied by his wife, and although his heart was beginning to fail, he yet felt he could render still another service by moving to a new country — the source of the classical tradition so dear to his heart, namely Greece. And so in 1977, at the age of eighty, he settled, with Ursula, in their last pioneer post, Athens. The first National Spiritual Assembly of Greece was elected that year.

Now came a time of spiritual maturity for Dr. Mühlischlegel. The harmony of his home attracted friends from near and far, and all drew benefit from his combination of love and wisdom. Restricted in his travels, this faithful servant of the Cause devoted his time to study and to the preparation of a book concerning the achievement of maturity in the Cause. God took the pen from his hand before this work could go to the printer. However, his wife, Ursula, intends to complete for him this last effort of service. On 29 July 1980 the Hand of the Cause of God Adelbert Mühlischlegel joined his Beloved and his loved ones in the Abhá Kingdom, leaving his wife, Ursula, to continue serving, assisted by him from on high. He is buried on the shores of the Mediterranean whose waters lap his resting-place and the shores of the Holy Land, which he so often visited to pray at the holy Shrines. Dr. Mühlischlegel had delighted a great number of friends with his poems; in 1977 a collection of these was published by the Bahá'í Publishing Trust of Germany, commemorating his eightieth birthday. His last poem describes his dedication to the essence of life. A copy appears in the original German in the poetry section of this volume of the international record.

The Universal House of Justice informed the Bahá'í world of his passing in its cable of 29 July:

WITH SORROWFUL HEARTS ANNOUNCE PASSING BELOVED HAND CAUSE ADELBERT MÜHLSCHLEGEL. GRIEVOUS LOSS SUSTAINED ENTIRE BAHAI WORLD PARTICULARLY FELT EUROPE MAIN ARENA HIS DISTINGUISHED SERVICES CAUSE GOD. SERVING FOR MANY YEARS NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY GERMANY HE BECAME AFTER ELEVATION RANK HAND CAUSE ONE OF CHAMPION BUILDERS EMERGING EUROPEAN BAHAI COMMUNITY CONSTANTLY TRAVELLING ENCOURAGING RAISING SPIRITS FRIENDS RESIDING WHEREVER SERVICES MOST NEEDED FINALLY PIONEERING GREECE AND SURRENDERING HIS SOUL PIONEER POST. HIS CONSTANT WILLINGNESS SERVE HIS ABILITY ENDEAR HIMSELF BELIEVERS AND OTHERS ALIKE BY HIS LOVING GENTLENESS SERENE HUMILITY RADIANT CHEERFULNESS HIS NEVER CEASING PURSUIT KNOWLEDGE AND TOTAL DEDICATION BLESSED BEAUTY PROVIDE WONDERFUL EXAMPLE BAHAI LIFE. ADVISE FRIENDS COMMEMORATE HIS PASSING AND REQUEST BEFITTING MEMORIAL SERVICES ALL MOTHER TEMPLES

ANNELIESE BOPP

PAUL EDMOND HANEY

1909-1982

In every dispensation the Manifestation of God, after His ascension, has raised up special individuals for the service of His Cause, men

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and women who have given their lives to promoting the new Message and who have become stars in the new heaven, second only in brilliance to those original Companions, Apostles, Letters, attendant upon the Prophet Himself during His earthly sojourn. Such a one was Paul Haney.

He was born of Bahá'í parents on 20 August 1909, during the ministry of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and his mother confided in writing to Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum, 'I was carrying him when we were in the presence of the Master in the Most Great Prison in 'Akká in 1909 — and I have always felt he was destined for the Cause.' Paul always maintained that this was his first pilgrimage.

Mary Ida Parkhurst and Charles Freeborn Haney were married in 1893 and became Bahá'ís in 1900. They were both of true, God-fearing, religious stock, Charles's father having been a well-known Methodist minister in Illinois, and one of the six founders of Northwestern University, in Evanston. His grandson, Paul, benefited from the provision in perpetuity of scholarships for descendants of the six. Not until nine years after their recognition of Bahá'u'lláh, and in the seventeenth year of their marriage, was Paul born, the only child of parents already immortalized as among the handful of first believers in the American continent. From the day they embraced the Faith, the whole life of the Haneys revolved about 'Abdu'l-Bahá; to serve Him, to consult Him, to be sure they were fulfilling His wishes, to receive His good pleasure, was their all in all. It was 'Abdu'l-Bahá Who called Mary Haney 'Mariam', a name she henceforth used all her life. This complete orientation to the Centre of the Covenant became for Paul — indeed for all that generation of Bahá'í children — the primary relationship in life.

We know little of the effect of pre-natal influences on the soul and not enough

about those of childhood, but the indications are that it would be hard to overstate them. Paul's entire environment, from that first embryonic visit to the Master, was entirely Bahá'í, focused on the Centre of the Covenant and later on the Guardian. Mariam wrote, 'Almost immediately after he was born . . . the Master gave him His own name — Abdul Baha — He also gave him the name Paul', and Corinne True confirmed, in a letter to Mariam from Alexandria on 19 November 1919, that she had asked the Master 'if He had given the name Abdul Baha to Paul as had been reported to you and He confirmed what you were given. Paul for the outside world. His real name is Abdul Baha.'

Many Tablets from the Master to Mariam refer to Paul. The newly born babe is blessed, and acceptable in the Divine Kingdom. He is a servant of the Blessed Perfection and belongeth to Him. Thank God for having been confirmed to attain such a blessing . . . I ask God that my namesake, Abdul-Baha, may grow and develop day by day and that his radiant face may be illumined with the light of the greatest bestowal ... It was also noted that ... thy dear son, Paul, feeleth greatly attracted to the Kingdom of Abhá. This news imparteth the utmost joy and happiness . . . Send Paul to school; I hope he will become a verdant and fresh plant in the Abhá Paradise ...

With such showering of grace from the Centre of the Covenant and with such spiritual antecedents it was natural to expect great things from him. Paul fulfilled those hopes — even as a child. He was a charming boy. His red hair — inherited from his mother — his blue eyes, frank and open countenance and cheerful disposition, even his unusual height and gangling gait, delighted people and endeared him to them. May Maxwell wrote to Mariam as Paul's fifteenth birthday approached, ' ... tell me if Paul has a tennis racquet because I would like to give him one on his birthday. I have a peculiar love for that dear, blessed boy.'

His mother adored him. She referred to him in her letters as 'beloved Paul', 'pure-hearted Paul' who 'loves everyone'; ' ... he is not mine any more for I have given him to the Most Great Cause.' The boy's father died when Paul was barely ten years old and Mariam raised him within the aura of her own single-minded devotion to the Master. She raised him alone and under great financial stress, but surrounded him with such tender care and infused into him such complete dedication to the Centre of the Covenant, and to the Covenant itself, that service to the Great Cause became the one purpose of his life. The loss of his father undoubtedly helped to develop in him that sense of responsibility

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Picture in Upper Left Corner of the Page with the Caption: Paul E. Haney

which was so marked a feature of his character. There is a touching story from his early youth demonstrating this feeling in relationship to his beloved mother. On Paul's entering Central High School, one of Mariam's neighbours said to her, 'Your lovely son will not come out of school as good as he is now.' Shortly after that Paul assured his mother that she need never worry about him;

he was not attracted by the wild life which so many youth feel to be a necessary proof of their manliness. There was no trace of sanctimoniousness in this attitude; he was just not attracted. There was a pure-heartedness about him which seemed an essential, unforced part of his nature. He enjoyed being decent and spiritually-minded and concerned with others. The Master's bestowal and his mother's loving education caused him to flourish spiritually. It would be hard to over-estimate Mariam's influence, not only upon the development of his character but upon his chief interest in life, for she was totally involved in the work of the Cause in North America, being secretary of the National Teaching Committee from 1920 — when Paul would have been eleven — for several years onward, and took an active part in the conferences, Conventions and summer schools. In fact the first Convention for Amity between the Coloured and White Races was held in Washington, D.C., in May 1921, where the Haney's lived. Mariam had asked the Master where she and her son could best serve the Cause, and He sent her a message through Corinne True to go to Washington, where she found a small apartment, of which she wrote, ' ... we are both very happy and our one room apartment is a haven of rest for us both ... ' As a youth Paul formed a close friendship with Mary Maxwell — later Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánúm — whom he met with other Bahá'í children at the Green Acre Summer School, Conventions, and on other Bahá'í occasions.

Before going to Northwestern University, Paul obtained work in a government office in Washington, and attended night school. When he was twenty-two years old he was appointed to the National Teaching Committee of the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada, an appointment which drew forth from Mary Maxwell the following note: 'As for you dear Paul I feel that you bring to the National field of teaching not only the steadfast faith, the spirit of devotion and sacrifice which so characterized the older generation of Bahá'ís and on which foundation our beloved Cause has been established in America, but the forward vision, the world-wide horizon, the thrilling life and motion of which our youthful Guardian is the Head and Source ... '

The Bahá'í Magazine of January 1934 contains an article entitled 'The Economic Organization of Society in the New World Order' by Paul Edmond Haney, M.B.A., and is described as 'written by a young Bahá'í student of economic problems ... ' Paul was by now a professional economist, having graduated from Northwestern University. At this time his life revolved around his professional duties and active service to the promotion of the Cause in North America. He was a member of the first National Youth Committee in the United States and was constantly active in the work of the Cause. In 1946 he was elected to membership of the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada. Canada established its own National Spiritual Assembly in 1948 and

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Paul remained a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States, serving as its chairman from 1950 to 1957. During these years he served the National Spiritual Assembly in innumerable ways. He was chairman of the Temple Trustees Construction Committee for the completion of the interior of the

Bahá'í House of Worship in Wilmette; he represented the National Spiritual Assembly at the formation of the National Spiritual Assembly of Canada; in 1951 he represented the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States at the formation of the Regional National Spiritual Assembly of South America, and in 1953 at the Regional National Spiritual Assembly of Italy and Switzerland.

Paul's Bahá'í background, his deep knowledge of the Cause, his upright and distinguished character lent prestige to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States, while at the same time his services as its chairman increased his own distinction in the Bahá'í world. It therefore came as no surprise

when, on 19 March 1954, the following cable came to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States: ANNOUNCE ALL NATIONAL ASSEMBLIES ELEVATION PAUL HANEY RANK HAND OF THE CAUSE. The Guardian's cable to Paul himself read:

ANNOUNCE YOUR ELEVATION HAND CAUSE CONFIDENT DIVINE BLESSINGS FUTURE SERVICES

Paul's reply to the Guardian was: OVERWHELMED OUTPOURING BELOVED GUARDIAN'S

BOUNTY BESEECH PRAYERS DIVINE ASSISTANCE RENDER ACCEPTABLE SERVICES RISE ABOVE FEELING COMPLETE UNWORTHINESS DEVOTED LOVE PAUL HANEY.

For the next three years Paul Haney's life was one of constant service in many parts of the world. In April 1956, on behalf of the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States, he attended the Convention of South and West Africa; in April 1957 he represented the Guardian at the first Alaskan Convention in Anchorage, where he read the message from the Guardian to that Convention. A letter from the Guardian to Mariam, during these years, contained the following passage in the section written by the Guardian's secretary: 'He [Shoghi Effendi] hopes that dear Paul will ever-increasingly be able to render the Cause important services. Surely you and his father in the Abhá Kingdom must rejoice to see how your cherished hopes are being fulfilled in this beloved son, who is so devoted, and has the interests of the Faith so completely at heart.'

Paul Haney, in his personal life, was unassuming, warm-hearted, friendly and even-tempered. He was a founder and one of the most popular members of the Caesaria Golf Club, where he often acted as judge in competitions and tournaments. One of the latter was an annual event for a trophy presented by the Bahá'í community of Haifa.

In the very early 1940s, when he attended the Green Acre Summer School, he delivered a message from his beloved mother to Helen Margery Wheeler, a Bahá'í from Worcester, Massachusetts. They were married in 1942 on 15 July, at Worcester, and went to live in Washington, not far from Mariam. They remained there until their removal to the Holy Land in 1958. On 1 September 1965 beloved Mariam Haney passed to the Abhá Kingdom. An account of her life may be read in *The Bahá'í World*, vol. XIV, pp. 346 ff.

The year 1957 brought to all the Hands of the Cause of God the greatest crisis — and the climax — of their lives. The sudden passing of the beloved Guardian, in London, on 4 November of that year, brought instant tragedy and dismay to the heart of every Bahá'í. But it was the Hands of the Cause who bore the main brunt of that bludgeon stroke, for they had been nominated, in

the last message penned by Shoghi Effendi, 'Chief Stewards of Bahá'u'lláh's embryonic World Commonwealth'. Upon them fell the burden, while bearing the stress of their own unendurable heartache, of preserving the unity of the Bahá'í world, reassuring the friends everywhere and encouraging them to maintain, unabated, the magnificent forward march of the Cause of God which had been built up during the first four years of the beloved Guardian's World Crusade. Their story is told in other places.¹ But that was their day of immortality, when they rendered historic and effective service to the whole of humanity. After the funeral in London they gathered in Haifa, and in the Mansion at Bahjí, to take up their glorious labours. One of their decisions

¹ The Bahá'í World, vol. XIV, pp. 431-435; see also Hofman, A Commentary on the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Epilogue, Rev. ed. (1982).

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was to elect nine of their members to remain in the Holy Land and serve at the World Centre of the Faith to continue the Guardian's work and bring to a successful conclusion his World Crusade with the election, in 1963, of the Universal House of Justice. Paul Haney was one of the nine elected; they were known as Hands of the Cause of God Residing in the Holy Land.

The great change for Paul entailed considerable sacrifice. Not only would he be separated from his beloved mother, but, in his professional life he was within sight of appointment to a very high and well-paid position. It is recorded that when requested to serve in the Holy Land he bowed his head and immediately agreed. A letter from Mariam to Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum dated 12 April 1958 reads as follows: 'The beloved Paul is so pure-hearted, so conscientious, so noble a soul that when this great blessing and honor came to him — that is, of being one of the nine Hands of the Bahá'í Cause to abide in Haifa — he said he could not live with himself had he not accepted this tremendous spiritual bounty ... naturally I miss Paul — the pure-hearted — but I believe I am with him daily in his service. Distance is no real separation when there is understanding and love.'

From now on Paul's entire life and total energies were concentrated on service to the Cause of God. He prepared the definitive statement on the Hands of the Cause of God and their activities during the interregnum between the passing of the Guardian and the election of the Universal House of Justice, which forms one of the most important items in the monumental vol. XIII of The Bahá'í World, and he played his part in composing the messages of explanation and encouragement which flowed from the Custodians, as the nine Hands of the Cause Residing in the Holy Land became known. He travelled the world as representative of the Custodians, attending National Conventions in the long-established Bahá'í communities and those inaugurating new National Spiritual Assemblies. At the great Jubilee in London's Albert Hall in 1963, celebrating the hundredth anniversary of the Declaration of Bahá'u'lláh and the victorious culmination of the World Crusade, he presented a significant paper on the importance of the World Centre of the Faith.

One of the first actions of the Universal House of Justice was to invite five Hands of the Cause to remain in the Holy Land for certain specified duties and as advisers to the House of Justice. Paul Haney was one of the five. One of his first appointments was to the Editorial Committee responsible for gathering information from the entire Bahá'í world and rewriting and editing it for distribution to all National Spiritual Assemblies. At Ridván 1965 he attended the fifty-sixth Annual Convention of the United States Bahá'í community as the official representative of the Universal House of Justice. And thereafter, Paul Haney, Hand of the Cause of God, distinguished, incorruptible, adamant in his defense of the Covenant, sound in his judgement and greatly loved by Bahá'ís everywhere, travelled throughout the world as representative of the Universal House of Justice, visiting Bahá'í communities and their institutions to advise, encourage and instruct. He attended diplomatic and governmental functions in Jerusalem as representative of the Bahá'í World Centre. Together with other Hands of the Cause he played a great part in the development of the Continental Boards of Counsellors, and later the International Teaching Centre, representing the Universal House of Justice at the inaugural gathering of the Continental Board of Counsellors for Asia, held in New Delhi in 1981. He took part in all four International Conventions held during his lifetime, and was chairman at the opening session of the 1968 event.

In August 1982 he represented the House of Justice at the Continental Conference in Quito, Ecuador, followed by a meeting with the Board of Counsellors for the Americas and attendance at the satellite conferences in Costa Rica and Panama. On his return to the Holy Land he delighted the Bahá'ís at the World Centre with his characteristically jovial, spiritually uplifting and informative account of the journey.

On 3 December 1982 he met death suddenly and instantly in an automobile accident. The Universal House of Justice sent the following cable to the Bahá'í world:

WITH STRICKEN HEARTS ANNOUNCE SUDDEN IRREPARABLE LOSS THROUGH AUTOMOBILE ACCIDENT 3 DECEMBER HIGHLY DISTINGUISHED

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GREATLY PRIZED HAND CAUSE GOD STAUNCH DEFENDER COVENANT PAUL HANEY. THIS DISTINGUISHED SERVANT BAHUULLAH WAS BLESSED CHILDHOOD THROUGH ATTAINMENT PRESENCE 'ABDU'L-BAHA. HIS NATURAL GENTLENESS GENUINE HUMILITY UNAFFECTED UNBOUNDED LOVE HIS UPRIGHTNESS INTEGRITY HIS SINGLE-MINDED DEVOTION CAUSE SINCE YOUTHFUL YEARS HIS UNFAILING RELIABILITY METICULOUS ATTENTION DETAIL CHARACTERIZED HIS HISTORIC SERVICES BOTH NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEVELS. SPANNING MORE THAN HALF CENTURY HIS TIRELESS LABOURS INCLUDED LONG-TIME MEMBERSHIP AMERICAN NATIONAL ASSEMBLY. SINCE 1954 HE CONSECRATED HIS ENERGIES AS MEMBER UNIQUE COMPANY CHIEF STEWARDS FAITH AND LATER AS MEMBER BODY HANDS OF THE CAUSE RESIDING HOLY LAND AT ONE OF MOST CRITICAL PERIODS BAHAI HISTORY. LAST DECADE HIS EARTHLY LIFE WAS FULLY DEDICATED DEVELOPMENT NEWLY FORMED INTERNATIONAL TEACHING CENTRE. GENERATIONS YET UNBORN WILL GLORY IN HIS

IMPERISHABLE ACHIEVEMENTS AND BE INSPIRED BY HIS UNIQUE FORTITUDE. ARDENTLY SUPPLICATING HOLY THRESHOLD PROGRESS HIS NOBLE SOUL ABHA KINGDOM. ADVISE HOLD THROUGHOUT BAHAI WORLD INCLUDING ALL MASHRIQUL-ADHKARS MEMORIAL GATHERING, BEFITTING HIS HIGH RANK AND HIS MERITORIOUS SERVICES.

AMATU'L-BAHA RUHIYYIH KHANUM

DAVID HOFMAN

ENOCH OLINGA

1926-1979

Enoch Olinga came from a family of devout Christian converts taught by the Church Missionary Society, now the Native Anglican Church of Uganda. His people lived in the Teso north-eastern part of the country and belonged to the Atesot tribe, of the clan of Aatekok or Iraraka. His father, Samusan Okadakina, of the village of Tilling in Ngora County, volunteered in 1920 to take Christianity to Soroti County where he became a catechist in the church, and where, in 1921, he married, according to church ritual, Eseza Iyamitai, who gave birth on 24 June 1926, in

Picture in Upper Right Corner with the Caption: Enoch Olinga

the village of Abaango, to her second son, Enoch. Enoch's father returned to his permanent home in Tilling — a name which will forever be associated not only with Africa's only native Hand of the Cause, but with the first substantial conversion of the African people to the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, an event which was a source of immense joy and pride to the heart of the beloved Guardian, Shoghi Effendi.

Enoch's stature must be seen against a unique period in Bahá'í history, for he accepted this new Faith of God shortly after its introduction into black Africa through a vast planned drive to carry Bahá'u'lláh's message to its people. During the last thirty years of Bahá'u'lláh's ministry a few of His followers living in Egypt and the Sudan were the recipients of His praise and encouragement; during 'Abdu'l-Bahá's ministry the Faith had reached Tunis, and for the first time some of its occidental supporters, greatly encouraged by the Master, were spreading its message in southern Africa; it remained, however, for the Guardian, Shoghi Effendi, at the time of the British National Spiritual Assembly's two-

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year interim plan in 1950-1952, to truly inaugurate the spiritual conquest of Africa through the strong support and guidance he gave to Persian, British and American believers to pioneer there. This initial step he followed up on a grand scale through the provisions of his World Crusade, inaugurated in 1953 — a Ten Year Plan which, among other objectives, was to open to the Faith 131 virgin territories in the five continents of the globe; many of its objectives concerned the work in Africa, whose pioneers were responsible for the phenomenally rapid spread of the Teachings amongst a race whom Bahá'u'lláh

Himself had compared to 'the black pupil of the eye' through which 'the light of the spirit shineth forth' — a statement fraught with profound implications, for the sight of the eye is in the pupil.

The current of Enoch Olinga's destiny carried him towards a fixed point; for the ten years after his father returned to Tilling in 1927, Enoch received his schooling locally and at Ngora, a small town not far from his home; later he went to high school in Mbale; during World War II, in 1941, he joined the British Army Education Corps and went to Nairobi in Kenya, later serving in the East African King's Rifles Corp in South East Asia, visiting Burma, East Pakistan, Ceylon and India. By 1946 he had returned to Uganda, a young man of twenty, and joined the Government Department of Public Relations and Welfare. For a time he was stationed in Soroti and Mbale, producing two books in his own language, Ateso, which were of assistance to the Government Education Department in the Teso district; later he moved to Kampala, the capital of Uganda.

By the time Enoch came into contact with the Faith in 1951 his personal life had assumed an entirely new aspect; he was now married and had his first children; he was a gifted translator working for the government, but also a somewhat disillusioned man who had become a very heavy drinker, a fact of which the government service that employed him had become aware and which led to his dismissal, in spite of his marked capacity and relatively long record of service. Unfortunately the reports on this serious impairment to the discharge of his duties had already gone through when Enoch accepted the Faith and upon his enrolment gave up all alcohol immediately.

Enoch was the third Ugandan to accept Bahá'u'lláh, but the first of the Teso tribe; he heard about the Faith from a friend who introduced him to 'Alí Nakhjavání, the son-in-law of Mr. and Mrs. Banání, who had left Persia to pioneer, in response to the wishes of Shoghi Effendi, had proceeded to Africa and settled in Uganda with their daughter Violette, her husband 'Alí, and their daughter, aged three, arriving there in 1951; Mr. Banání purchased a home in the heart of Kampala, at 3 Kitante Road; events were to take place there, of both joy and grief, which are inextricably interwoven with the unfoldment of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Divine Plan in that continent.

Once Enoch had met 'Alí a friendship began to unfold and Enoch attended the regular evening meetings held for enquirers in the Banání home, where the warmth of this Persian Bahá'í household greatly attracted him. In February 1952 Mr. and Mrs. Banání left on their pilgrimage to the World Centre, and it was agreed that during this time the pioneers in Kampala would hold a special meeting for all the Africans who were interested in the Faith and that this would coincide with the time in Haifa when the Guardian usually visited the Shrines; Mr. Banání would inform him of this and ask for special prayers. Shoghi Effendi was happy to comply with this request, and he and Mr. Banání visited the Shrines together at that hour. Enoch attended that meeting in Kampala — but nothing happened! The three pioneers — the Nakhjavánís and Philip Hainsworth — felt very discouraged. Later that night, however, he

returned, posed many questions and ended up by asking 'How does one become a Bahá'í?' Early the following morning he appeared with a letter requesting to be accepted as a believer; from the very beginning Enoch had avidly read every Bahá'í book he could get, and this laid the foundation for his deep knowledge of the Teachings. Mrs. Olinga, making no secret of the fact that it was the remarkable transformation in her husband's conduct since he had become a Bahá'í that influenced her decision, also embraced the Faith. Gradually others swelled its numbers in Kampala so that by 21 April 1952, the first, historic Local Spiritual Assem-

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bly of Uganda, of which Enoch was a member, could be elected in that city. Some months later Enoch returned to his Teso home in Tilling to spread the glad tidings of Bahá'u'lláh's teachings and aroused such interest that he returned to Kampala and persuaded 'Alí to visit Tilling, as the people there wanted to see with their own eyes the white man who had converted Enoch to this new doctrine. 'Alí, first with Enoch as interpreter, later with Enos Epyeru, one of the first Teso believers, travelled and taught in the Teso district for several weeks, where regular enrolment now began, one of the first being Enoch's own father, who became a very staunch Bahá'í.

In the beginning of January 1953 — eight months after the Local Assembly of Kampala was formed — the Guardian cabled the Bahá'í world: **SHARE BAHAI COMMUNITIES EAST WEST THRILLING REPORTS FEATS ACHIEVED HEROIC BAND PIONEERS LABOURING DIVERS WIDELY SCATTERED AFRICAN TERRITORIES PARTICULARLY UGANDA,** and went on to liken these feats to episodes related in the Book of Acts in the Bible and to the rapid and dramatic propagation of our own Faith by the Dawn-Breakers of its Heroic Age. He stated that what was happening in Africa eclipsed even the marvellous accomplishments in Latin America and surpassed the exploits which immortalized the European Crusade. Shoghi Effendi attached great importance to the identity of people; the believers were never an amorphous mass who accepted Bahá'u'lláh; they were individuals, interesting, like the coloured pieces that make up a beautiful mosaic picture. It was at this moment that the spotlight went to Uganda and was held there till the end of Shoghi Effendi's life. In that same cable he went on to say: **NUMBER AFRICANS CONVERTED CAUSE LAST FIFTEEN MONTHS RESIDING KAMPALA OUTLYING DISTRICTS PROTESTANT CATHOLIC PAGAN BACKGROUNDS LETTERED UNLETTERED BOTH SEXES REPRESENTATIVE NO LESS SIXTEEN TRIBES PASSED TWO HUNDRED.** This was the first blast on the trumpet of 'entry by troops' predicted and so much hoped for by 'Abdu'l-Bahá. In that same cable the Guardian announced that no less than nine localities would be qualified in Ridván to form their Local Assemblies; still more significant, however, was his announcement that he would send to the first of the four Intercontinental Conferences to be held in 1953 — which was the African one held in Kampala — a copy of the portrait of the Báb, the showing of which he was confident would bring the new African believers **CLOSER SPIRIT MARTYR-PROPHET FAITH** and **BESTOW EVERLASTING BENEDICTION ALL GATHERED MEMORABLE SESSIONS EPOCH-MAKING CONFERENCE.** It was Enoch, the new Bahá'í, who found

himself on the Kampala Local Assembly, caught up with veteran believers in making plans for this unique and historic gathering. When Enoch had been disheartened over losing his job, Mr. Banání, in a flight of prophecy, had rallied his spirit, assuring him he would get an even better job — which he later did. The Conference was to be held from February 12th to 18th and the Guardian himself had placed a sum of money in charge of Mr. Banání to be used exclusively to bring some of the new Bahá'ís as his guests. As the 'mass conversion' was taking place in Teso, this meant that about 200 people would be brought down by bus from this north-eastern province, which was a trip of over 200 miles. 'Alí Nakhjavání went to escort the friends and invite them to be Shoghi Effendi's guests. When the men got on the buses many of the women wept and wailed because they were afraid their men were being taken off to be slaves!

In his greeting and message to this 'epoch-making' Conference, which the Guardian hailed with a 'joyous heart', he said 'welcome with open arms the unexpectedly large number of the representatives of the pure-hearted and the spiritually receptive Negro race' and pointed out that their continent had retained its primitive simplicity and 'remained uncontaminated' by what he characterized in scathing terms as the evils of 'a gross, a rampant and cancerous materialism undermining the fabric of human society alike in the East and in the West' and 'threatening to engulf in one common catastrophic convulsion the generality of mankind'. Weighty words containing a weightier warning. In this message Shoghi Effendi outlines the vast amount of work lying ahead for the six sponsoring National Assemblies, the indigenous believers themselves, and their pioneer helpers. No less than thirty-three virgin territories are to be opened to the Faith and three giant National — really

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regional in nature — Assemblies are to be formed, embracing the continent: Central and East Africa with its seat in Kampala, South and West Africa with its seat in Johannesburg, and North-West Africa with its seat in Tunis. Amongst other additional objectives, the Hand of the Cause for Africa, Mr. Banání, is to nominate during the following Ridván, 1954, an Auxiliary Board of nine members to assist in the tasks that lie ahead.

Every one of these points touches on Enoch's own life: it was his people, the Tesos, numbering many tens of thousands, who formed the vast majority of Bahá'ís in Uganda before the civil war; he responded to the appeal for pioneers to open the thirty-three territories and himself became a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh; he was elected to the first National Spiritual Assembly of North-West Africa; he was appointed a Hand of the Cause in the last contingent of eight elevated to that rank by Shoghi Effendi just before he passed away. Enoch thus became the colleague of Músá Banání, in whose home he had accepted the Faith. There can be no doubt, as we look back on his life as a Bahá'í, that the experience of Enoch, when he saw the portrait of the Martyr-Prophet of his Faith, did indeed bestow an 'everlasting benediction' upon him.

Enoch was now established in his new job and his reformed way of life — but a strong wind was blowing, the wind of God calling the souls of the receptive Bahá'ís to arise and hear the call of their Lord and carry His Message to far places. As Enoch's father had once arisen to carry the Christian Faith to another territory, so now Enoch and two other new Ugandan believers arose to leave family, home, job and country to carry the glad tidings of Bahá'u'lláh across the continent to West Africa, to some of those waiting, unopened countries. Mr. Banání, the Spiritual Conqueror of Africa, as Shoghi Effendi called him, had recently bought a small Peugeot station-wagon which he placed at their disposal. Originally the trip had been planned to take Violette to visit a Bahá'í family in the Congo, but now its character entirely changed when the ever-faithful and ever-enthusiastic 'Alí volunteered to drive the three would-be pioneers across the continent in his capacity of spiritual pilot and physical chauffeur. The five set off, on 27 August 1953, with not too much money and almost no information about the route that lay ahead, on probably the most abominable roads in the world, in a passenger car certainly not equipped to cope with them. Their consolation then, and throughout the entire journey, was a cable received from their beloved Guardian on the eve of their departure: **LOVING, FERVENT PRAYERS ACCOMPANY YOU.**

About a week later Samson Mungono was dropped off in Kamina, in what was then the Belgian Congo (now Zaire), which already had two non-African believers living in different parts of the country; by 26 September Max Kenyerezi, the Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for French Equatorial Africa (now Congo Republic), had been established in Brazzaville. The longest and hardest part of the journey, however, still lay ahead through the deep tropical jungles of Gabon: passing through a disease-decimated area, plagued by insects, constantly getting stuck in the mud, 'Alí or Enoch had to walk many miles to get help from villagers to lift their car out of the bog; so difficult was the road that in one day, during sixteen hours, they progressed only 100 kilometres. On the next day they made only 25 kilometres in fourteen hours; finally the car really broke down; Enoch volunteered to walk ahead 50 miles, with a villager as a guide, to get help from a town that reputedly had a garage; separating from Enoch distressed the Nakhjavánís even more than their own plight; 'Alí — no mechanic — at last succeeded in repairing the car's clutch sufficiently to limp along on Enoch's trail, constantly breaking down, but eventually managing to overtake him the following day after Enoch had walked 35 miles; he was exhausted from bad dysentery, in pain and very worried over them; on reaching the town 'Alí, who had been badly bitten by tsetse flies — the dread carrier of sleeping sickness — and Violette, who had also been bitten by them, went to the hospital for tests and treatment, but Enoch was so ill he was hospitalized for two days and could not travel for a week. When they had overtaken Enoch he told them that the night before, when he was alone with only strange Africans around him with whom he could not talk, afraid for his safety and the money he was carrying, full of misgivings and doubt, asking himself why he had left home and family on

such a mad undertaking, he dreamed of Shoghi Effendi, who took him in his arms and held him close, and into him had poured comfort and reassurance; this dream restored his faith and affected him so profoundly he cried out in his heart to the Guardian that he was willing to go through such hardships for him every day of his life!

Finally, on 10 October, the little party crossed into French Cameroons, but Enoch's objective was British Cameroons, a goal which he was to fill on behalf of the British National Spiritual Assembly. The main bridge between the two countries was down; by a long and agonizing detour the party at last drove into Mamfe — rushing for the post office there to cable the Guardian that British Cameroons was now opened by Enoch's arrival. It was 4 p.m. and the postmaster was closing up, but 'Alí begged him to re-open so that this important cable could get off before the Holy Year ended on that very night of 15 October. On the 16th they arrived in Victoria, on the coast, where Enoch was to live for the coming ten years before returning permanently to his homeland in East Africa.

The Africa of those days was still under colonial administration; reluctantly the Nakhjavánís and Enoch agreed that their association might place in jeopardy the object of so much effort and sacrifice because Victoria was only a small town and two white orientals and a black Ugandan were far too conspicuous a combination. The first problem was where to find lodging for Enoch; tribalism, even today, makes one group very suspicious of any other; no one wanted to take in a man from another people 3,000 kilometres away, the other side of Africa. Finally, through the familiar odd series of circumstances which seem so often to open doors for Bahá'í pioneers, a young man working in the local library got into conversation with Violette, found she was worrying over how to find accommodation for a 'young Ugandan we know', and asked to meet Enoch. The upshot was Enoch became a lodger in the home of David Tanyi, who not only accepted the Faith through him, becoming the first believer in the entire Cameroons, but later became the Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for French Togoland. The Nakhjavánís removed to near-by Douala, in the French Cameroons, where they could still be close to Enoch without arousing the suspicions of the local authorities in Victoria because they wanted to be sure he would get his residence visa and was safely settled in his pioneering post before they returned to Uganda. Enoch himself discreetly but eagerly began to teach new friends.

The period of the Guardian's World Crusade was indeed a time of flame. A holy enthusiasm to teach the Cause of God to humanity spread far and wide. Shoghi Effendi, greatly encouraged by the remarkable trek across Africa which had already led to the opening of two new countries, now encouraged Enoch to do the seemingly impossible and raise up, from among his new converts, pioneers to go forth and open other virgin territories. When one realizes that Enoch himself was a new Bahá'í and a recent pioneer, his success was almost miraculous. In a letter addressed to Leroy Ioas dated 15 April 1954 — exactly six months after his arrival in the British Cameroons — Enoch wrote: 'Praised be to God

that our Beloved Guardian's admonition to assign and get pioneers settled in the five virgin territories has through Beloved's Boundless Grace been fulfilled. We prayerfully raise up our suppliant hands and voices of praise to Bahá'u'lláh for His guidance and confirmations, and I feel very firmly that He will assuredly assist and guide these new and young soldiers in His triumphant Army, and render them victorious for, according to my little understanding and belief, they have in them such a rare spirit of love and devotion to His Best Beloved Cause.'

At first, he wrote, it looked almost impossible to get any of the new believers to leave their homes and move to foreign lands; '... but I knew very well that the Beloved Guardian, who is actually watching the world and all the believers, could not have asked for the impossible. As soon as the news reached their attentive and sensitive ears the believers reacted in such a manner that a spectator could take them for drunkards . . . they really became intoxicated with the choice wine of His love and of submissiveness and obedience to the call of their Best Beloved. Pioneering offers poured in like locusts and clear signs of obedience to move the next minute were made manifest, forgetting their property and loving relatives and families.' Indeed, so many

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offers to pioneer were made that in the end they had to draw lots to see which five would be chosen to go.

'Alí flew back to Victoria to help make the arrangements for visas and transportation — in those days a much more complicated matter than today in independent Africa. 'When 'Alí arrived', Enoch wrote, 'not a single moment was wasted. Off they flew like very mighty eagles in the heavenly sky. Such are the soldiers of Bahá'u'lláh. O! How I wish I accompanied them! May Bahá'u'lláh sustain them and guide their footsteps along the glorious path of spiritual understanding and selfless sacrifice so that they may grow into trees whose fruits will be the food for the hungry ones. My constant prayer is that they may find means of settlement. I know the Beloved Guardian's fervent prayers are with them.'

Enoch also reports that the letter of Shoghi Effendi to David Tanyi, received on the eve of his departure to pioneer, was indeed a remarkable coincidence and that David had said he was going to frame it. At the airport, while relatives dissolved in tears, the pioneers cheerfully marched to the plane, a contrast which to Enoch crowned 'the pioneering of these gallant and stalwart soldiers of the Ancient Beauty'.

In answer to his letter Enoch was assured that the Guardian 'was deeply moved by the reports which you sent and the manner in which the friends received his call to pioneer to the virgin areas. He feels this is truly historic, because it means that people who have been Bahá'ís for only a short period, have arisen to carry the Glad Tidings to peoples of new lands. The manner in which the Faith has spread in Africa is truly remarkable, and overshadows the manner it has spread in other parts of the world. It indicates how glorious will be

the future of the Faith in that great continent.'

The names of these precious and distinguished spiritual children of Enoch, who received each the title, like himself, of Knight of Bahá'u'lláh, are as follows: David Tanyi, French Togoland; Edward Tabe, British Togoland; Samuel Nijiki, French Cameroons; Benedict Eballa, Ashanti Protectorate; Martin Manga, Northern Territories Protectorate.

Two months later, on 14 June 1954, Enoch wrote his first letter to Shoghi Effendi; as far as records go it seems this was his only one, hence I will quote it in full as it well reflects his love, his respect, his obedience to the Head of his Faith and the one who had become the focal point of his life:

My Well-Beloved Guardian,

I must first thank my Well-Beloved Guardian for continually praying for my spiritual welfare as well as of those who are now serving the Ancient Beauty, and for the Beloved Guardian's guidance, without which the present spiritual achievements of our beloved Faith would have not been possible.

Furthermore, I very humbly beg to assure my dearly loved Guardian of my unreserved loving devotion to the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh, and my submissiveness to every one of the Guardian's admonitions in the way of promoting the fundamental interests of our Faith, which is now over-shadowing the entire world. May I also be permitted to express the joy and delight which the letters received by the individual Bahá'ís from the Beloved Guardian have brought to the hearts of all the believers of this nascent community. These letters, like the fervent prayers of the Beloved Guardian, do wonders here. Our daily prayer and hope is that God, the All-Compelling, the All-Protecting may prolong the days of our Beloved Guardian's unbroken service to His Cause and mankind.

As my Beloved Guardian may be aware, an Assembly was elected here last Ridván, and through Beloved's Grace the coming Ridván may bring us a number of Local Assemblies. I have just returned from a two weeks' teaching trip which took me right inside the country where I had quite thrilling and exciting experiences; especially when I had to live among the villagers who believe in witchcraft and potency of 'Juju' (fetish, I think) practices. Quite terrifying it was to hear very frightful stories told by 'Juju' adherents, but with much confidence in Bahá'u'lláh I was never deterred. Fortunately enough a few of them were enabled to see the Truth of the Message of Bahá'u'lláh — may my life, soul and spirit be a

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sacrifice unto the lowliest of His servants!

It may please my Beloved Guardian to know that ten new centres have been opened to the Faith, making a total of twelve centres in British Cameroons. We want to develop all the eleven towards Assembly status before the next Ridván. We really need our Well-Beloved Guardian's special prayers for success in this somewhat ambitious project.

We receive very encouraging letters from all our five pioneers who have gone to open virgin territories. They all seem very happy there and are waiting for the doors of success to be opened for them. We all hope and pray that in time they will find jobs they can do. This is not only because they will thereby be able to support themselves, but also because they will feel so much more happy and settled when they have jobs of work to do. They will take root and feel they belong. We always encourage them to remain there as much as we can when we write to them.

My Well-Beloved Guardian may be interested to know that the number of believers is increasing very rapidly in British Cameroons. The present situation is: accepted believers, up to 30; declarations, up to 40; centres now opened to the Faith, 12.

Please, my Beloved Guardian, I know how much busy you are, therefore I shall not dwell on inconsequentialities.

I very reverently beg to send my loving greetings and best wishes to my Beloved Guardian and all members of family.

With warmest Bahá'í Love from Victoria believers,

I beg to remain,

my Beloved Guardian,

Your devoted servant,

Enoch Olinga

It was not the custom of the Guardian to keep copies of his wide correspondence; we do know, however, that this letter was answered by him on 9 August but, unfortunately, the original has not been found.

In those days the Bahá'ís throughout Africa were few and far between but part of the great Ten Year Plan of Shoghi Effendi was to create not only Local Spiritual Assemblies but bodies to fulfil the functions of National Spiritual Assemblies; he solved the problem of too few believers in any one country to justify an independent National Assembly by constituting, in 1956, a number of giant administrative units so that the Bahá'ís could learn to think and function in an administrative manner. The biggest group — united under the umbrella of the National Spiritual Assembly of North-West Africa, with its secretarial seat in Tunis, Tunisia — comprised no less than 25 territories, namely, Algeria, Ashanti Protectorate, British Cameroons, British Togoland, Canary Islands, Cape Verde Islands, French Cameroons, French Morocco, French Togoland, French West Africa, the Gambia, Gold Coast, Liberia, Madeira, Morocco (International Zone), Nigeria, Northern Territories Protectorate, Portuguese Guinea, Rio de Oro, St. Thomas Island, Sierra Leone, Spanish Guinea, Spanish Morocco, Spanish Sahara and Tunisia. In spite of this impressive list there were only about 1,000 Bahá'ís in this vast area and the National Body rested on 38 Local Assemblies; thanks to Shoghi Effendi, however, Tunis had its own National Bahá'í Headquarters, and Bomi Hills, in Liberia, was the proud

possessor of the only endowment; Enoch Olinga was elected chairman of this new Body. It seems unbelievable that in the brief space of three years, of the thirty-three virgin territories throughout Africa to be opened to the Faith, twenty-nine had already received pioneers.

In the heart of Enoch burned the great desire to make the pilgrimage to the World Centre and meet his beloved Guardian in person. Permission was finally asked and granted by Shoghi Effendi who, as was his custom, set a date by week, in other words Enoch was informed he would be welcome as a pilgrim in the first week of February 1957. Dr. Ugo Giachery, Hand of the Cause and member-at-large of the International Bahá'í Council in Haifa, was residing in Rome; he has given us this endearing image of Enoch: he arrived from Tunis the morning of 1 February 1957, 'he was young, lean, lovable at first sight and believing that this Hand of the Cause could perform miracles. He had an old English passport that had expired some years before, and practically not a penny (of any currency) in his pocket. I took him to the

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British . . . Consulate. The wax-moustached Consul, for a solid twenty minutes, denied the possibility to renew the passport. I had told Enoch not to say anything but recite the Remover of Difficulties . . . When I said that Mr. Olinga had been called by the Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith, to Haifa, the Consul opened a drawer of his desk, took a voluminous dossier with blue pages, leafed them with great attention and then said: "I think I can do it." With the valid passport in hand we rushed to the Israeli Embassy for the visa, which was granted immediately. Then I thought that Enoch could be hungry and I asked him if he was. "Yes", he said; he had not eaten from the night before . . . Dear, dear Enoch, he had stolen our hearts!

Enoch, in his wide travels all over the world, often had recourse to the 'Remover of Difficulties'. I remember once his telling me that at the end of a long trip, as he went to embark for Uganda, the air company employee who was weighing him in said he was overweight and must pay so and so much excess baggage; Enoch said he was on his way home after a long trip and just did not have the money; she said he must either pay or leave his luggage behind. Whereupon, standing there in the airline queue, he drew out his prayer book and began to read a prayer to himself. The girl said, 'What are you doing!' Enoch said: 'I am praying, what else can I do?' She was so non-plussed by this she waved him and his baggage on with no extra payment.

On 3 February Enoch arrived in Haifa and left on the 13th; he stayed in the Oriental Pilgrim House near the Shrines on Mount Carmel, which meant Shoghi Effendi was going to treat him as an oriental pilgrim; the men who stayed there had the privilege of not only taking walks in the gardens with the Guardian but the great blessing of always visiting the Shrines with him and hearing him chant the Tablets of Visitation in his wonderfully melodious voice; to add to this privilege Enoch was most of the time alone; naturally Shoghi Effendi spoke to him in English. Sometimes Enoch would recall his first impressions, how

anxiously he waited to be called to the presence of the Guardian, how he could not imagine what Shoghi Effendi would be like or how he would look but then discovered with what majesty he spoke and that when he saw him walking 'he walked like a king' and one knew that it was his to command, that he held the authority. Enoch told his children Shoghi Effendi was like a lion, but at the same time very gentle; he reported an experience common to a great many pilgrims, that he found before he had a chance to ask the questions, Shoghi Effendi had answered them. Unlike most pilgrims, however, when the Guardian said goodbye to him he kissed him on both cheeks.

Few pilgrims, indeed, left the Holy Land without their visits to the Shrines and their meetings with the Guardian beginning to work a change in them; Enoch was no exception; the love showered upon him by Shoghi Effendi, the illuminating quality of his conversation, profoundly affected Enoch's whole life; whereas before he was a needle jumping about in the direction of north, he now became like an adjusted compass oriented firmly to the Centre of his Faith, his Guardian, his true king. He went back to West Africa enkindled, reassured, more mature. Excerpts from two of Enoch's letters to me, written in 1956 and 1957, vividly reflect the depths of his attachment to Shoghi Effendi: 'Please, will you remember me to the beloved Guardian and tell him how much we all love him'; 'Having visited and prayed in the Blessed Shrines, gazed on the holy face of our Guardian and heard his melodious voice, I am sure a new day has dawned upon me!'

A letter written on 15 February 1957, on behalf of the Guardian to Músá Banání, expressed 'his pleasure with the visit on his pilgrimage of the first African Bahá'í of the Ten Year Crusade — in fact, the first Negro Bahá'í from Africa. Enoch Olinga has achieved many victories for the Faith; first in his work in Uganda; then by pioneering in the British Cameroons, becoming a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh there. Five of his spiritual children went from the Cameroons, to virgin areas of the Ten Year Crusade, thus becoming themselves, Knights of Bahá'u'lláh. He himself has confirmed 300 souls, with five Assemblies. The Guardian considers this unique in the history of the Crusade, in both the East and West; and he has blessed the one who so selflessly served, and won these victories for

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the Cause of God, by naming him "Abu'l-Futúh", the "Father of Victories". The Guardian felt you and Ali would be pleased to know this, as he was Ali's spiritual child.

For various reasons, economic and otherwise, Enoch's wife and children had remained in East Africa; now, however, with his election to the North-West African National Spiritual Assembly and his ever-increasing teaching activities, it seemed he was permanently settled in West Africa, and shortly after his return from pilgrimage he went back to Uganda to fetch them. It was on 2 October 1957, at the time of this visit, that Mr. Banání received a cable from Shoghi Effendi requesting him to inform Enoch Olinga, as well as two

pioneers serving in Africa — John Robarts and William Sears — of their ELEVATION RANK HAND CAUSE, adding FEEL CONFIDENT HIGH DISTINCTION WILL ENABLE THEM ENRICH RECORD THEIR MERITORIOUS SERVICES. Enoch was summoned to that same home where he had accepted the Faith and the Guardian's cable placed in his hands; he read it and then prostrated himself flat on the floor, a mark in Africa of deep submission to one's Liege.

It must be remembered that for Enoch and the seven other Hands of the Cause of God appointed by Shoghi Effendi at the same time, his death, one month later, coming as it did so swiftly upon the already stunning news of being raised to the rank of a Hand, was a tremendous shock; before they could do more than acknowledge this new station conferred upon them, their guide and 'true brother' was gone! Enoch cabled Shoghi Effendi on 4 October, BELOVED'S HOLY MESSAGE JUST RECEIVED BENUMBED MY FACULTIES. WITH MUCH SUBMISSIVENESS AND HUMBLENESS I ACCEPT DIVINE FAVOUR DEEPLY GRATEFUL BELOVED'S SACRED WISHES FOR OUR PROGRESS BESEECH HIS PRAYERS FOR CONFIRMATION GUIDANCE AND SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT. DEVOTEDLY ENOCH OLINGA.

Returning to live in Victoria with his family, Enoch's teaching activities throughout West Africa continued on an ever-wider scale; all the British territories in that region were controlled and administered from Nigeria and many new converts were brought into the Faith by him in that country, which he frequently visited, as well as in the Cameroons. His oldest son, George, recalls that during those West African years his father was often absent on very long teaching trips outside the country; Enoch himself mentions Ghana, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and the Gambia 'to mention', he says, 'but a few', where he was 'instrumental in guiding many souls to the Cause of God'. The vivid stories he told his family when he returned stimulated the children's interest in the Faith; sometimes, if he was only on a week-end trip in the Cameroons, he took George with him. Not only was his service to the Faith a special thing for Enoch but in his home there was always a special place for his treasured photographs of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi and places with sacred associations. All this implanted in the hearts of his children a similar love and respect; all of them grew to be staunch Bahá'ís.

Although the formalities required to attend the beloved Guardian's funeral in London prevented Enoch from being present, he was able to join his fellow Hands at their first Conclave held immediately after Shoghi Effendi's passing, in Bahjí, on 18 November 1957, and to be present at all the others. In spite of the fact that Enoch had the gift of words and was a brilliant public speaker, he was remarkably silent, I remember, during our meetings, following carefully the long hours and days of discussion in two languages, English and Persian, keeping his own counsel deep in his heart, making up his own mind. When one remembers he was a new Bahá'í of only four years' experience, that he was a young man only thirty-one years old — our baby Hand — one must realize that these were years of great stress for him; they were terrible years of stress for his much older peers, many of whom were born Bahá'ís!

One of Enoch's most endearing qualities was his laugh, a great, joyous,

consuming and contagious laugh. His fellow Hands were not slow to appreciate this and went so far as to save up funny stories the whole year so they could tell them to Enoch at the next Conclave; God knows our hearts and minds were weighted down enough with our responsibilities and problems so the laughter at our dining table was a welcome relief for often sad and exhausted minds, but sometimes they made Enoch laugh so much that I scolded them, saying they would make him ill; of course others laughed too — but not like Enoch,

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who would begin by chuckling and end up convulsed.

Ever since his pilgrimage Enoch and I had become very close; some of the Hands slept in Bahjí while others returned for the night to Haifa; Enoch and I were among those who always remained in Bahjí during the entire Conclave; I remember once, when we had a regular plague of snails devouring the gardens, I insisted that the Hands come out and pick snails, giving them buckets and bowls to put them in: in the bright moonlight about eight of us started down the borders in front of the Shrine; eventually when I turned around I found everyone had sneaked off, only faithful Enoch and I were still gathering snails!

Those years from 1957 until 1963 — when Enoch returned to live in East Africa — were in many ways very difficult for him; his relations with Eunice, his first wife, were going from bad to worse; finally, after about three years, she returned to East Africa, but the children remained with him; a divorce was obtained in 1961 and in 1963 Enoch went to Nairobi with his second wife, Elizabeth, by whom he had two children, Lennie and Tahirih.

While still resident in West Africa Enoch returned to Kampala to attend the historic occasion of the laying of the foundation stone of the Mother Temple of Africa on 14 January 1958; he took part in the African Teaching Conference held concurrently with that event, he and I sharing the platform of the public meeting; a week later the impressive Bahá'í African Intercontinental Conference, called by the Guardian, was held in Kampala — one of five similar conferences marking the mid-way point of his World Crusade; Enoch was chairman of one of its sessions and speaker at another, his theme: 'The Vital Process of Individual Conversion.'

All these events and pressures on Enoch's life were — as should be the case for each of us — shaping his character, helping him to grow spiritually into his own potentialities, maturing him into a truly great man, but not without suffering, anxiety and descending into valleys as well as scaling mountains. In a letter to me on 13 October 1963 Enoch wrote from Nigeria: 'I am now on my way to Nairobi where I intend to make my home', and where he says he will have 'to overcome many difficulties which are bound to come my way'; he asks for prayers for his 'weak, frail and helpless self . . . the pain I experience these days is big . . . pray for me that I may rise above the present mental and soul-destroying condition in which I sadly find myself . . .' He always supplicated his beloved Blessed Perfection, 'I know He will help me to

disintegrate the wall which surrounds my entire being and which I am struggling to break.' Dark years of upheaval for Enoch.

He finally returned to live in his native village of Tilling in Teso, Uganda, and build a house there for his family. Gradually, through the loving guidance of the Universal House of Justice, he once again began to travel widely for the Faith. Like other Hands of the Cause, he often represented the House of Justice at International Conferences and inaugural Conventions of new National Spiritual Assemblies all over the world. His travels to these, as well as many long tours undertaken in all the continents of the globe, were a source of happiness to both Enoch and the thousands of believers who met him; he grew steadily into his maturity. He was a very intelligent man, a very eloquent, self-possessed speaker; he was both dignified and urbane in his handling of officials and the media. Enoch had presence; it is hard to describe because there was something very African about it, the 'presence' of a big chief, who is both a father-figure and rules. He was sincerely kind, loving and interested in other people and they felt this — high and low alike — and responded. That big, spontaneous laugh was also there, to carry others on with it in a great relaxing wave of sheer mirth.

The Hands of the Faith chose Enoch to be chairman of the opening session of the beloved Guardian's Bahá'í World Congress, held from 28 April to 2 May 1963, commemorating the end of his great Ten Year Plan, his World Crusade. About 7,000 Bahá'ís were present, from most of the territories and major islands of the world, gathered in the beautiful Albert Hall of London. The big, black Enoch was a befitting figure to stand before such a motley crowd on such an historic occasion!

Enoch met many heads of state as he visited different countries; one of the most interesting interviews he ever had was with the Dalai

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Lama in October 1968, in his retreat at Dharamsala in India; the party were first thoroughly searched by the Lama's security people, and after some delays, received by His Holiness, the spiritual leader of the Tibetan people and to them the reincarnation of Buddha. He was surprised and interested to see these guests who included a black African, his wife and daughter, an Englishman and two Indians. Although he spoke through a translator, it was evident that he understood English; he commented that they were all different people, to which Enoch replied, 'Yes, but we are all of the same family', and went on to elaborate this theme and also to give an account of Bahá'u'lláh's exiles, imprisonment and sufferings, which struck a deep chord of sympathy in his host. Their visit lasted over an hour — which was unusual — and His Holiness showed them excessive courtesy; there was no doubt of the impression Enoch had made on him as he set forth many of Bahá'u'lláh's teachings.

The common sense and wisdom of Enoch was nowhere better exemplified than in the conversations his Persian daughter-in-law Forough Ehsani, a pioneer in Uganda, has recorded having with her much-loved father-in-law in connection with her

marriage to his son George. In Tilling Enoch had a special office of his own, his 'prayer room', in which were his pictures of the Master and the Guardian and things that were dear to him; there he often spoke with her. It was in this room one day that he asked her if she was sure she wanted to marry George: ' "Do you like to marry him? . . . marriage is not so easy. You have to be careful. Have you thought of the future and how the difficulties will be? You are different, from different homes and country, do you in your heart accept that? Do you really like that?" Many times he asked and I said, "Yes, I do." So he hugged and kissed me and said, "The rest is with Bahá'u'lláh, He will solve the problems." ' A day came when a crisis arose; after her child was born, during the first year of her marriage, a serious misunderstanding between her and a member of the family took place; she was so distressed she took up the child and left the house. 'Enoch', she said, 'sent one of his sons after me with this message: "Tell Forough to come and leave the child in this house, and whenever she wants to go, she can go." ' When she confronted Enoch she said: 'But this child is mine!' Enoch replied, 'No, this child belongs to this family; if you have a misunderstanding you solve it with the members of the family. You cannot mix up the child with your problem and somebody else's problem. Leave the child and then we can solve it all together. Don't mix up the child with this problem.' She remembers that: 'When he said that I felt my knees shaking! I put the child down and said, "But how can I go without my first child?", and then he told me, "When your anger has dropped, you come to my office. I want to see you, not with George, only you." ' George remained quiet throughout, praying inwardly that all would resolve itself. She went to Enoch's office, in what must have been a terrible upheaval for all of them; he reminded her how, before her marriage, he had warned her there would be problems; earnestly, looking into her eyes he said: 'Forough my dear, your behaving as you did, taking the child out and not solving the problem, does not help you, does not help me, and especially does not help the Faith. You know that whatever you are doing from today should help the Faith, the name of the Faith. And you know the slightest problem between you and George, how it can damage the Faith. Will you please think this way and forget the rest!' Forough recalls: 'He completely changed me. He said a prayer, he hugged me, and he cried. He cried and I felt the wetness of his crying, and he said, "Please, please help the Faith!" ' She rejoined the family, was completely reconciled, and from then on harmony prevailed. Enoch had impressed on her the greatest lesson of all — the Faith comes first.

There followed many years of active service; Enoch, often accompanied by his wife Elizabeth — herself a devoted and active believer — travelled widely, visiting and stimulating the Bahá'ís, meeting high officials, bringing the Faith before the public and the media. His children grew up, two daughters married Bahá'í pioneers, George and Forough had two more children. Although the Olinga home was in Teso, after the death of Mr. Banání, Enoch purchased the historic house in which the Banání-Nakhjavání family had lived for so many years in Kampala, the home in

which he himself had accepted the Faith and learned of his elevation to the rank of Hand of the Cause.

To enumerate in detail his services and travels from 1958 until his death in 1979 is impossible; long and authoritative biographies are required to recount the exploits of the Hands of the Cause appointed by Shoghi Effendi; only a glance at Enoch's major activities during those years is included here. He attended three of the 1958 mid-way point of the World Crusade continental conferences called for by Shoghi Effendi, namely, that of Africa, held in Kampala; Europe, held in Frankfurt; and Asia, held in Singapore. After the latter he made of tour of Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, Samoa and Pakistan, it being the policy of the Hands to make as wide and economic use as possible of the visit of a fellow Hand to attend conferences or conventions by visiting, going and coming, as many centres as possible throughout the area. In 1960 Enoch visited many places in West and North Africa, Sicily and Italy; in 1961, after representing the Hands of the Cause at the inaugural Bahá'í Conventions in Jamaica, Dominican Republic and Cuba, he toured the Greater Antilles and Central America for four months; in 1962 he travelled extensively in East Africa, the Sudan, Ethiopia and the Congo (now Zaire); in 1964 he represented the Universal House of Justice at the inaugural Conventions of the National Spiritual Assemblies of the Indian Ocean, in Mauritius, and South Central Africa, in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe); in 1967 he represented the Universal House of Justice at the inaugural Convention of the National Spiritual Assembly of Swaziland, Lesotho and Mozambique; in 1968 Enoch attended the large Mediterranean Bahá'í Conference held in Polermo, Sicily, and — like most of his fellow Hands — was present at the glorious celebration in Bahjí of the one hundredth anniversary of Bahá'u'lláh's arrival in 'Akká as a prisoner; also in 1968 when Enoch was received by the Dalai Lama at his headquarters in India he visited many Bahá'í centres in that vast sub-continent; in 1969 Enoch represented the Universal House of Justice at the election of the first National Spiritual Assembly of Burundi and Rwanda; in 1970 he represented the Universal House of Justice at the formation of the first National Spiritual Assembly of Upper West Africa, making later that same year an extensive tour of South America, Central America and the Antilles, passing through the United States and visiting many centres there; he then proceeded to the Pacific where he visited the Solomon Islands and Japan, attending in January 1971, as representative of the Universal House of Justice, the South China Seas Oceanic Conference in Singapore, and later that same year fulfilling the same function at the inaugural Convention of the National Spiritual Assembly of Chad; in 1971 Enoch represented the Universal House of Justice at the first Convention of the National Spiritual Assembly of Iceland and afterwards exhaustively toured the Bahá'í communities in Scandinavia, Britain and Italy, visiting Persia with Elizabeth in July to pay his homage to the House of the Báb in Shíráz and other Bahá'í historic sites. Enoch was becoming increasingly preoccupied with Africa as the problems of that continent steadily augmented: in 1973-1974 he went on a five-month teaching trip to twelve countries of West Africa; 1975 saw him back in that area to attend, as the representative of the Universal House

of Justice, three inaugural Conventions during the Ridván period — not an unheard of event as other Hands on occasion duplicated such efforts — for the election of the National Spiritual Assemblies of Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea, and Upper West Africa; during this same year Enoch again toured twelve West African countries, assisting them to win their goals, and, returning to Uganda, spent the remainder of that year as well as the opening months of 1976 intensively working amongst the Bahá'í communities there. During the summer of that year Enoch also revisited eight countries of West Africa before representing the Universal House of Justice, in January 1977, at the International Teaching Conference held in Brazil and later attending a similar conference in Mérida, Mexico, visiting some other countries in the western hemisphere, and returning from the New World to Africa in time to represent the Universal House of Justice at the inaugural Convention of the National Spiritual Assembly of Upper Volta. Having revisited various neighbouring countries, Enoch returned to Uganda to devote the

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remaining two years of his life to protecting, comforting, stimulating and preserving the endangered Bahá'í community of his native land, in the bitter throes of a terrible civil war, the aftermath of which eventually led to his own death.

News of the banning of the Faith in September 1977 — the official dissolution of all its administrative bodies and activities — reached Enoch in Kampala; he is reported to have said: 'No! No one can ban the Faith of God . . .' For the Bahá'ís it was a shocking and heartbreaking experience, the more so because the first Temple of Africa stood on Kikaya Hill, on the outskirts of Kampala, and the Ugandan believers had always been a distinguished and thriving community. Enoch drafted a letter to the President, which he and the secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly delivered to the President's office, calling his attention to the nature and status of the Faith and the respect it had always enjoyed in Uganda. This and other petitions had no effect whatsoever.

Enoch's deep study of the Teachings and wide experience made him an ideal shield for the Cause of God during that crucial period; realizing the hopelessness of protest and petition, he set himself to do three things: to ensure that the believers obeyed the government implicitly; to encourage them and keep alive their faith; to protect the Bahá'í properties and remove to a safe place its sacred and irreplaceable archive materials, which he stored in Tilling. Immediately following the edict Enoch and Mr. Isimai, the secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly, had closed the National Headquarters at the Temple site, refusing even to sell Bahá'í books. There can be little doubt that this complete obedience to the government decree, conforming as it did with the explicit instructions of Bahá'u'lláh Himself that Bahá'ís must obey their governments, was the best possible way of protecting the precious Temple, which was never confiscated, occupied or damaged, but left in the custody of the Bahá'ís.

Following upon the banning of the Faith, the Universal House of Justice made the Hand of the Cause and the two Counsellors, Oloro Epyeru and Kolonario Oule, responsible for the guidance and protection of the Ugandan community, a duty they discharged with great devotion until the Universal House of Justice was able to re-establish an administrative body in August 1979.

As the months went by Uganda sank ever deeper into bitter civil war, terrorism and chaos, in the tide of which Enoch and his family were eventually so tragically engulfed. It should be remembered that Enoch was not only a famous Bahá'í — the first African Hand of the Cause and one of the only two Negro Hands, the other being Louis Gregory of the United States — but also a well-known, capable, prosperous business man, with relatives and friends in high positions. As a consequence of this prominence he was a target for subversive elements. His son George recalls his father's telling him, even before the war broke out, that he had discovered his name was on a list due for 'elimination' in Teso. During those crucial times Enoch often said he would never leave Uganda, never run away.

In March 1979, when the war of liberation was gaining momentum day by day, he decided to motor from Tilling to Kampala, a distance of some 300 kilometres; his uncle came to remonstrate with him, pointing out the dangers, and urging him not to go, but Enoch was not dissuaded and said: 'What do I have to fear? Did the Báb run away? Did Bahá'u'lláh run away? Did 'Abdu'l-Bahá run away?', and described how wonderful it was to die a true believer, that if the veil were lifted between this world and the next we would yearn to die.

On the way to Kampala he met with a terrible automobile accident when an army lorry struck his car, knocking it off the road into a gorge, where it rolled over and over; he was also robbed of a large sum of money. This occurred on the 25th; that night, as Enoch and his family prayed together in their Kampala home, he assured them that were it not for Bahá'u'lláh, he would most certainly have died from such an accident. As if this were not enough shock for the family to bear, two days later Enoch's son Badi vanished without a trace; a week later, however, he returned unscathed; it seemed soldiers had hijacked him and his pick-up for a job out of town, later releasing him. After Badi disappeared, as the situation in the city became increasingly dangerous, the Olingas went up to the Temple

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property, about 10 kilometres away, a long and exhausting walk for Enoch, who was still in great pain after his accident. By 6 April he decided to send his youngest child, Tahirih, with her mother back to Tilling — which they were fortunate to reach alive as the train was strafed by bullets many times on the way. Miraculously Badi returned safely at this time and Enoch promptly sent him and his brother Patrick after them. He himself was too weak as a result of the accident to make the arduous trip back to Tilling.

Enoch now returned alone to his home on Kitante Road. By 10 April thousands of people were in flight from Kampala, which was being heavily bombarded; once

again Enoch was persuaded to seek refuge on the Temple property and made his painful way there, on foot, struggling against the frightened crowds of people leaving the city. All that night a fierce artillery battle raged around Kikaya Hill; he spent the night praying and wondering what was happening to the House of Worship and if he would ever see the dawn. The next day, however, the Temple still stood unscathed and the longed-for news was broadcast that Amin's government had been defeated. Enoch and another believer hastened to the Mother Temple of Africa, opened all nine doors and offered prayers of thanksgiving to Bahá'u'lláh. How appropriate, how mysterious, that dear Enoch, who had been present at the cornerstone-laying of the Temple in 1958, should with his own hands throw open those doors!

The following day Enoch went to Kampala, anxious for the safety of his house, as both the soldiers and the local population were extensively looting the city; he arrived to see it being stripped bare and narrowly escaped being shot as he was accused of being one of Amin's men — an accusation which fortunately he successfully refuted! There being nothing he could do, he returned to the Temple where his protection was essential during those wholly lawless days of transition. Elizabeth and his children were eager to rejoin him, so he decided to restore and refurnish his home.

Although the ban on the Faith was not officially lifted for some months, the situation had entirely changed and the Universal House of Justice decided to appoint an interim administrative body to gradually reorganize Bahá'í activities and take charge of Bahá'í properties in preparation for the time when the National Spiritual Assembly could be re-elected. The first meeting of this Uganda Administrative Committee would take place on 25-26 August in the National Headquarters; the derelict state of this and other buildings at the Temple site distressed Enoch very much and with few to help him, he set about set about preparing the Hazíratu'l-Quds, cleaning it up, arranging the offices and files, even going so far as to himself assist in washing the floors. For Enoch service always meant doing what needed to be done. He was radiantly happy over this event; when the Committee members gathered, each was presented with the gift of a new prayer book, with passages marked to be read, for Enoch had a 'well-worked-out and soul-stirring devotional programme'; the group then proceeded to the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár for the solemn inauguration of their historic function, and afterwards visited the grave of the Hand of the Cause Músá Banání, who is buried in its vicinity. Enoch was invited to chair the first meeting and read the letter of the Universal House of Justice appointing the Committee and outlining its functions; he then observed that they were now 'an arm of the Universal House of Justice stretched over Uganda' and called upon them at all times to rely on the power of the Holy Spirit to assist them. On the second day Enoch again was invited to act as chairman; he outlined their duties, stressing the crying needs of the Bahá'í community throughout the country and the serious condition of the Temple property, which had perforce been neglected and suffered depredations — telephone connections, water supply, lawn mowers, office equipment, all required urgent attention.

Enoch's son George, recalling his father's last days, says he spent most of his time on Kikaya Hill; he was happy, the formation of the new Uganda Administrative Committee had lifted a great burden; after all the years of frustration and anxiety, at last the administrative edifice of the Faith was again raised and he told some of the friends that this was such a relief, he was ready to die. He loved serving the Temple, cleaning and sweeping it out on Saturdays so it would be ready for the Sunday morning public service; many times he himself would slash away at the overgrown

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lawns surrounding it with the heavy panga knife, working to the point of exhaustion. When he heard the lawn mowers had at last been procured in Nairobi for this work he was delighted as now the much-neglected, beautiful gardens could be gradually restored.

The strain and horror of the months of violent war had particularly affected the health and spirits of Enoch's youngest child, Tahirih, who was approaching her fifteenth birthday. It was the family custom of the Olingas to gather together on holidays and special occasions, and Elizabeth and Enoch decided a reunion should take place around the week-end of Sunday, 16 September, which they hoped, in addition to all being together again, would cheer Tahirih up. Forough was in her late pregnancy and had been badly beaten and kicked when soldiers broke into her home in Fort Portal; she did not know if the baby still lived, and after this attack she and George and the children went to Enoch's home in Kampala, where Forough saw a doctor; Elizabeth, however, was not satisfied and insisted that George must take her to a Bahá'í doctor in Mombasa, Kenya, for examination and treatment, and gave her some money to purchase while there a skirt and blouse for Tahirih as there was nothing to be obtained in Uganda. Enoch told them he would be expecting them back for the family reunion; all of this took place about three weeks before his death.

Enoch did not attend the second meeting of the Uganda Administrative Committee, which was held on 15 September in the Hazíratu'l-Quds, the Counsellor, Mr. Kolonario Oule having specially come from Teso to discuss certain matters with them. In the Kitante Road house only Tahirih, Lennie and Badi were with their parents that week-end; George and his family were still in Kenya, Patrick was delayed on a job in Teso and Godwin was also late in getting home. The arrival of these three sons of Enoch was delayed, seemingly by trivial circumstances, yet thus their lives were saved, for had they returned earlier they would surely have been murdered with the rest. It was the custom of the family in those disturbed times to always leave someone inside the home to protect it, in addition to the houseboy who also acted as gardener and lived next to the house in a separate building. On that Sunday, however, 16 September, Forough reports, Enoch insisted they should take a picnic lunch and all of them go to Kikaya Hill for the day.

Mrs. Catherine Kabali, an Auxiliary Board member, was an eyewitness to the events of those days. The friends were going to the Temple grounds earlier than

usual because the Hand of the Cause was going to brief them on the situation of the persecuted Bahá'ís in Írán. She describes Enoch, in his white suit, with his 'brilliant and dignified face', joyfully joining the singing in the Temple service of a Swahili offering, 'Be happy, be happy, because it is the day of oneness today!' Some Bahá'í young people had come down from Teso with Mr. Oule to help clean up the Temple property and later in the day they provided music; Enoch and Elizabeth joined in the dancing; when Tahirih hung back shyly her parents swept her into the dance too and all danced and danced. Mrs. Kabali writes: 'I remember Elizabeth dancing, waving her hands, not knowing yet she will leave this world tonight. She waved and waved, saying goodbye.'

When the family returned home, neighbours later mentioned, Mr. Olinga had seemed in a very good mood, walking about his garden, waving to them and saying 'hello'. After the terrible events of that night the Counsellor, Mr. Peter Vuyiya arrived in Kampala from Nairobi a few days later. His report conveys an accurate observation of the situation in the city at that time, the background against which the terrible drama of Enoch's murder took place: 'Staying in the middle of the town, I had the full effect of the state of anarchy in Kampala at night . . . it was impossible to tell the police Kombis from any other that might have been responsible for murders in the city and its environs. Every night, however, brought with it the murder of yet another family.' He wisely adds: 'With so much speculation regarding what may have been the motive of the murders, I have thought it more safe to steer clear of the questions why, when and how the murders took place.' 'With surety we will never know — as with all evil deeds, unwitnessed, in nights of terror and chaos throughout history.

From many first-hand accounts, however, the following events of that terrible crime

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seem clear: the family had its evening meal together — the houseboy had seen them about to serve it; the dishes were neatly stacked in the kitchen sink as usual, where they were found the next day; the houseboy stated that he was in his room when, about 8.30, he heard someone shaking the gate to the compound and, looking through the window, saw five armed men walking towards the back door leading to the kitchen (it is believed a sixth man was left to guard the gate). They shouted 'Open' and banged on the door. Lennie opened the door and there was a sound of shots; the houseboy fled over the fence to hide in the neighbour's bushes and remained there in terror all night, seeing nothing but hearing shooting and other sounds going on for about two hours; at dawn he ventured out of hiding, went to the house, seeing the body of Enoch lying in the courtyard and inside, all in an inner bedroom, the bodies of Elizabeth, Tahirih, Lennie and Badi, heaped on the floor where they had fallen when shot to death. People were beginning to gather outside and they told him he should inform the police, which he did, and then, with singular loyalty to Enoch and his family, went to Kikaya Hill to give the news. Mr. Oule from Teso, who was sleeping on the Temple property, was informed of the unbelievable tragedy which

had taken place; it was only because he wished to go at dawn to the Temple for prayers — not having been in Kampala for some time — that he was not killed also for he invariably stayed in Enoch's home. Mr. Oule, the Board member Catherine Kabali, and her sister Edith Senoga — who both lived on Kikaya Hill — then rushed to the home of Enoch. Their horror and grief at what they found was indescribable. It is greatly to the credit of the African friends in Kampala that, crushed and overwhelmed as they were by this truly staggering tragedy — a tragedy which shocked the Bahá'í world to its furthest corners — they went into action immediately and efficiently in spite of their personal, heart-rending grief.

The oldest pioneer, Claire Gung, frail and in her seventies, was at once informed and was able to telephone Nairobi and give the news. George and his family had motored up on the 16th from Mombasa to Nairobi and at the National Headquarters found a telegram from Enoch giving a list of spare parts for his car he wished them to bring in addition to a number of other things he had ordered. Planning to buy these things and then proceed to Kampala — an eight-hour drive — George and Forough went shopping in the city. It was while they were absent the news came from Kampala; the Counsellor Peter Vuyiya was there and was able to telephone the Universal House of Justice, which was in session at the time, and speak to Enoch's spiritual father, 'Alí Nakhjavání. If anything could be considered fortunate during so much calamity it was this, that the House of Justice was in a position to immediately instruct the friends that the Counsellor Kolonario Oule, together with the Uganda Administrative Committee, whose members were already gathered in Kampala, should take charge of the situation, make all necessary arrangements and ensure that a befitting funeral for the Hand of the Cause and his family would take place.

The problem facing the Bahá'ís in Nairobi was how to break the news to George and Forough. To blurt it out was beyond the capacity of these loving friends, so the National secretary wrote a short, most tender letter of condolence, explaining what had occurred and it was handed to George and Forough when they came back to the Centre. George's one desire was to reach his father and do everything necessary. In spite of remonstrances, the family left for Kisumu that same afternoon and that night George, to his great comfort, was able to talk to 'Alí Nakhjavání in Haifa. The next morning, well knowing nothing was available in Uganda, they bought the material for the five shrouds and left for Kampala. In the midst of lamentation and shock, the surviving sons, Patrick and Godwin, joined George; Enoch's two older daughters, Grace and Florence, married and living abroad, hastened to Kampala with their husbands, as did Forough's brother; already friends and relatives had arrived from Teso on the night of the 17th, including the Counsellor, Oloro Epyeru, who had been prevented by illness from coming to Kampala for the meetings of the Uganda Administrative Committee; everyone shared the grief of the children, everyone came to be present at the funeral; the harassed family, for over a week, fed from eighty to one hundred and fifty

people a day in the Kitante Road home. The bodies of the slain Olingas had been removed to a hospital pending arrangements for the burial. During the hours of curfew every night the city was still racked with gunfire and acts of terrorism, including the murder of many other entire families. Indeed, during that week Enoch's home was subjected one night to heavy gunfire, everyone in the house lying on the floor for protection; fortunately no one was injured and the police put a guard on the building. To make all the arrangements, procure suitable coffins, dig five graves on Kikaya Hill, get the authorities to provide police escort for the funeral cortége, find transportation for the coffins, the family and the large throng of mourners — it all required truly herculean efforts.

In the world press the murder of Enoch received wide notice: 'A world leader of the Bahá'í religious sect, his wife and three children were murdered in the Ugandan capital Kampala on Sunday', it spread like wildfire; the Ugandan radio, on 17 September, broadcast the news in six vernacular languages so that the Bahá'ís throughout the country might be informed of the fate of the 'Father of Victories'.

On the morning of 24 September — which coincided with Tahirih's birthday — the five coffins were removed from the mortuary of the hospital and taken to Enoch's home where, flower-draped, they were placed in the sitting-room; prayers were read, and many people came to pay their last respects; by 12.15 the funeral procession was ready to leave for Kikaya Hill, two motorcycle policemen preceding it, then a car carrying the Counsellors, followed by the car carrying the coffin of the Hand of the Cause which was followed by another one carrying Elizabeth's coffin and a third carrying the three coffins of the children. It was only through the co-operation of many non-Bahá'í friends that this transport had been procured. Followed by cars bearing the family, the cortége went slowly along Gayaza Road towards the Temple; hundreds of people lined the streets, some wept while others were heard to cry: 'Look at the bodies! Eh, eh, another one! Oh, another one!' A wave of public sympathy swept the crowd. With great respect the five coffins were placed in a row in the hall of the National Headquarters, flowers laid upon them, and a beautiful and uplifting funeral service held; a number of prominent Ugandan officials, friends of Enoch and admirers of the Faith, attended it. In a burial plot not far from the Temple on Kikaya Hill Enoch Olinga was laid to rest next to Músá Banání, his fellow Hand; the one designated the 'Spiritual Conqueror of Africa' was joined in death by the 'Father of Victories'. Nearby Elizabeth and Tahirih, Badi and Lennie were placed in their graves.

To the Bahá'ís of the world the Universal House of Justice announced Enoch's passing:

WITH GRIEF-STRICKEN HEARTS ANNOUNCE TRAGIC NEWS BRUTAL MURDER DEARLY LOVED GREATLY ADMIRER HAND CAUSE GOD ENOCH OLINGA BY UNKNOWN GUMEN COURTYARD HIS KAMPALA HOME. HIS WIFE ELIZABETH AND THREE OF HIS CHILDREN BADI, LENNIE AND TAHIRIH HAVE ALSO FALLEN INNOCENT VICTIMS THIS CRUEL ACT. MOTIVE ATTACK NOT YET ASCERTAINED. HIS RADIANT SPIRIT HIS UN-WAVERING FAITH HIS ALL-EMBRACING LOVE

HIS LEONINE AUDACITY IN THE TEACHING FIELD HIS TITLES KNIGHT BAHAUULLAH FATHER VICTORIES CONFERRED BELOVED GUARDIAN ALL COMBINE DISTINGUISH HIM AS PREEMINENT MEMBER HIS RACE IN ANNALS FAITH AFRICAN CONTINENT. URGE FRIENDS EVERYWHERE HOLD MEMORIAL GATHERINGS BEFITTING TRIBUTE HIS IMPERISHABLE MEMORY. FERVENTLY PRAYING HOLY SHRINES PROGRESS HIS NOBLE SOUL AND SOULS FOUR MEMBERS HIS PRECIOUS FAMILY.

Enoch had an example he used to give to the Bahá'ís: he said all of us are like guitars; when a guitar hears of a great Divine Musician he hopes to be played upon by this Musician. He offers himself to the Supreme Musician. The Musician accepts him, takes the guitar close to Himself, plays upon it. But soon He finds the strings are out of tune. The Musician starts tuning one, winding the string tighter. The pressure is painful to the guitar, it resists the winding. Then instead of yielding, the string breaks. As it is the wish of the guitar to give forth the divine melody, the great Musician plays upon the strings that remain. But the tune is still wrong. So the Musician starts tuning another string. It resists and finally breaks. Still the guitar wishes to be played upon. The Musician plays upon these

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Picture at the Top with the Caption: Enoch Olinga with some members of his family; September 1979. The Hand of the Cause is third from the left, third row; to the right, his wife, Elizabeth; front row, left to right, his children Badi and Tahirih, and daughter-in-law, Forough. In the second row, far left, is seen Counsellor Kolonario Oule. The photograph was taken approximately two weeks before the murder of Mr. and Mrs. Olinga and three of their children.

fewer strings. Again and again a string needs tuning. Again and again the guitar refuses to yield to the winding, the pressure. At last only one string is left and to be faithful to the offer of the guitar the Divine Musician says, 'I will play on this one string.' But that too is out of tune. Again the winding, the terrible pressure, and this one string also breaks. Then the Musician has no choice but to lay the guitar aside. Thus are tests given by God to perfect us, not to destroy us. The destruction comes only from our resistance to the tuning. The purpose is not punishment but the intention to fulfil the desire of the guitar to be played upon.

How many tests Enoch surmounted, submitting to the Hands of his beloved Bahá'u'lláh, to the tuning of the Divine Musician, until finally the guitar was laid aside for good — but the music remains.

RUHIYYIH

HASAN M. BALLYUZI

(HASAN MUVAQQAR BALLYÚZÍ)

1908-1980

WITH BROKEN HEARTS ANNOUNCE PASSING DEARLY LOVED HAND CAUSE HASAN BALLYUZI. ENTIRE BAHAI WORLD ROBBED ONE OF ITS MOST POWERFUL DEFENDERS MOST RESOURCEFUL

HISTORIANS. HIS ILLUSTRIOUS LINEAGE HIS DEVOTED LABOURS DIVINE VINEYARD HIS OUTSTANDING LITERARY WORKS COMBINE IN IMMORTALIZING HIS HONOURED NAME IN ANN BELOVED FAITH. CALL ON FRIENDS EVERYWHERE HOLD MEMORIAL GATHERINGS. PRAYING SHRINES HIS EXEMPLARY ACHIEVEMENTS HIS STEADFASTNESS PATIENCE HUMILITY HIS OUTSTANDING SCHOLARLY PURSUITS WILL INSPIRE MANY DEVOTED WORKERS AMONG RISIN GENERATIONS FOLLOW HIS GLORIOUS FOOTSTEPS.

Universal House of Justice, 12 February 1980

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Picture Upper Left Corner with the Caption: Hasan M. Balyúzí

Hasan Muvaqqar Balyúzí was loved and honoured both in his native Írán and his adopted England, and by virtue of his consistent services in the British Bahá'í community for nearly fifty years earned a central role in its history. A student from his youth, he became in the last decade of his life and in the sight of all the Bahá'í world, its pre-eminent scholar, yielding place only to Mírzá Abu'l-Fadl, by whose learning Mr. Balyúzí was himself astonished. He seemed, from his earliest years, a mature and balanced person, as though his gentle yet remarkable qualities were his by birth — an innate courtesy and kindness, an easy yet dignified bearing, a delightful wit and humour, an appreciation of every effort or service offered by others for the Faith, understanding of apparent frailties of behaviour, seeing beyond these to the longings and pain of human souls, quiet perseverance in fulfilling his own responsibilities, untarnished steadfastness in his loyalty to the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh, complete and heartfelt obedience to the Central Figures of the Faith and its Guardian, staunch and knowledgeable support of all the institutions of the Administrative Order — these give but an incomplete portrayal of one whose presence conveyed to those who knew him a sense of well-being, tranquility and hope.

At the moment of his first meeting, in his youth, with Shoghi Effendi, his inmost being was quickened to the reality of the Guardian's servitude at the Holy Threshold, and his sensitive, receptive spirit became, and ever remained, centred upon the greatness and glory of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh. His life can be understood in no other terms than his striving to serve that Revelation, in whatever course events might take, in health or in sickness, to his closing days in this world, when his utmost longing was to lay his head on the threshold of the Most Holy Shrine and offer to the King of Glory with his own hand the gift of his last, heroic labours.

I. Family and Youth

Hasan Balyúzí shared with the Guardian of the Faith descent from the same great-grand-father, Hájí Mírzá Abu'l-Qásim — one of the two brothers of Khadíjih-Bagum, the wife of the Báb — whose daughter, Fátimih-Sultán-Bagum, was Mr. Balyúzí's paternal grand-mother. His paternal grandfather was Muhammad-Hasan, a merchant of a Bushire family, whom Bahá'u'lláh accepted as of the family of the Báb, and a son of this union

was Mírzá 'Alí Aqá, later entitled Muvuqqar'id-Dawlih, the father of Hasan Balyúzí. His mother, Munavvar Khánum, traced her descent from both brothers of the wife of the Báb, and thus Mr. Balyúzí's 'illustrious lineage' had a twofold bond with Khadíjih-Bagum for whom he had a particular love and esteem.

Abu'l-Qásim Afnán, close relative of Mr. Balyúzí and Custodian of the House of the Báb in Shíráz, has stated that during his pilgrimage the Guardian of the Faith referred to three outstanding members of the Afnán family. The most distinguished was Khadíjih Bagum, the wife of the Báb, then Hájí Mírzá Siyyid 'Alí, the uncle of the Báb and one of the Seven Martyrs of Tihrán, while, 'at the present moment', the most distinguished was Hasan Balyúzí, and 'all the Afnán should follow in his footsteps'.

Hasan Balyúzí was born on 7 September 1908 in Shíráz where, at the age of four, he began to acquire his mastery of the English

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language. Most of his early years, however, were spent in Bushire where his father — diplomat and later Governor of the Persian Gulf Ports and Islands — resided, and he entered school when about five. When, in the First World War, Bushire was occupied by British Forces, his father was exiled to India where the family lived in Bombay and then for four years in Poona. They were accompanied by two outstanding scholars, friends of his father, who tutored him in Persian, Arabic and history until he entered Bishop's College in Poona, an English high school where he perfected his English. He also learned Urdu, and is remembered as translating, at about the age of nine, for Abbas Dehkan who first met him there. When his father returned to Tihrán after the War to become a member of the Cabinet (Vazír) as Minister of Interior, Hasan attended the Cyrus School, whose headmaster was Prof. Sadíq-A'lam, later Persian Ambassador in London and Minister of Education. A year or so after his father's death in May 1921, he accompanied his mother to Shíráz, but as educational opportunities for him were lacking at that time, in 1925 his uncle addressed Professor Browne to ask him to take charge of his nephew's education in England, whence Hasan's mother desired to send him. In his reply 5 May 1925 Browne referred to Hasan's father, 'my old friend 'Alí-Muhammad Khán, Muvuqqar'id-Dawlih, whom I became acquainted with about 1885 in London under the name of Mírzá 'Alí Aqá and of whom I saw so much in Shíráz in the Spring of 1888', and added: 'I need hardly say how glad I should be to do anything I could for his son. But I am afraid that my health makes it impossible for me to take charge of his education here...' Browne had suffered a severe heart attack some months before and died 5 January 1926. In recounting this incident Hasan comments: 'However I was then not old enough or qualified to enter a university in Britain. Thus it was that I went to Beirut, and to the Preparatory School of the American University there. My journey to England in pursuit of education had to wait for several years when I could come to take up higher studies.'

'A Personal Note', written by Mr. Balyúzí in May 1969, continues with an

account of his journey to Beirut and his memorable welcome in Haifa, at the age of seventeen, by Shoghi Effendi, the young Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith. At that time Hasan knew little about the Faith as a religion, although aware of family relationships with 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the visits of distinguished Bahá'ís such as Mírzá Mahmúd-i-Zarqání, and social occasions to which their neighbour in Shíráz had invited him. He had, it is true, found Some Answered Questions among his father's books and had begun to read it with the intention of rebuttal, but unable to find fault he was left frustrated but interested. On asking for further books he was given a manuscript of the Táríkh-i-Jadíd. Nonetheless, writes Dr. Moojan Momen, 'had it not been for his meeting with Shoghi Effendi, he would probably have recorded himself as a Muslim at the University', and this is confirmed by Farhang Afnan's comment that 'prior to going to Haifa, in his heart of hearts he could not reconcile himself one hundred per cent that there could be any prophet after Muhammad ... "

This is Hasan's own description: 'My route to Beirut was through the Red Sea, Port Said, Haifa. It was in the latter part of November 1925 and John Ebenezer Esslemont, the immortal author of Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era, lay mortally ill in the old Pilgrim House. His illness greatly occupied the Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith.

'During my stay of one night (November 21st-22nd) on Mount Carmel two eminent Persian Bahá'í physicians who were there, Dr. YúnisKhán Afrúkhtih and Dr. Arastú Khán Hakím, were called in the early hours of the morning to Dr. Esslemont's bedside. Shoghi Effendi sat up with him through the night.

'The next day I left for Beirut in the company of Dr. Afrúkhtih and Dr. Hakím.

'It was that bounty of meeting Shoghi Effendi and all that I saw in him, which confirmed me in the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh. The course of my life was changed.'

Dr. Momen has supplemented this account with notes taken during various conversations with Mr. Balyúzí: 'He was taken to the house of the Master and put into a drawing-room all by himself. He did not know what was going to happen. Suddenly Shoghi Effendi entered the room. Balyúzí rose and wanted to kiss his hand [as was the Persian custom], but Shoghi Effendi would not allow this and instead

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embraced him. Then Shoghi Effendi sat him down and talked with him for more than an hour. What particularly impressed Hasan was the way in which Shoghi Effendi would answer a problem or a question by drawing the answer out of the questioner ...

'And so it was that his Faith was confirmed and when he went on to Beirut and at the University he was asked his religion for the official forms, he said "Bahá'í".'

In the words of Mrs. Balyúzí, 'Hasan was so struck by the kindness and

courtesy of the Guardian, at such an anxious time, to a boy of seventeen, that from that time he became confirmed in the Faith.'

Hasan spent seven years, 1925-1932, in Beirut, reading for a Bachelor's degree in Chemistry after a preparatory year, and then turning to a study of Diplomatic History for an M.A. 'He took a full part in University life,' writes Mrs. Balyúzí, 'playing football and tennis, and engaging in the activities of the Dramatic Society, the Debating Society and of course the Bahá'í Society.'

In his brief time with the Guardian he had accepted the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh with his whole heart and at once became one of its most active supporters. According to the Hand of the Cause Abu'l-Qásim Faizi, the 'beloved Guardian encouraged the Persian youths [to] continue their studies in the American University of Beirut, rather than going straight from Persia to the European countries ... Gradually it became a centre of attraction', the 'number of Bahá'í students increased, and this large community needed a brotherly leadership. This mantle suited' Hasan Balyúzí, who had been one of the first of the Bahá'í students there. 'With great wisdom and heartfelt affiliation to the Cause of God', he gathered the students together, arranged weekly programmes in the home of the Iqbál family, encouraged every student to prepare a talk in English on an aspect of the Faith, and reported to Shoghi Effendi the details of an annual meeting. He also sought permission from the Guardian for the Bahá'í students to visit Haifa during their Easter holiday, and Mr. Faizi recalled that Shoghi Effendi advised them to come in small groups at Easter and other holidays as well. It was Hasan who planned the prayers and readings whenever his and Mr. Faizi's group met the Guardian. 'That was the happiest period of our lives when dear Hasan put all of us on a path conducive to the approval and appreciation of the beloved Guardian.' And after he had departed to study in London, 'he kept us happy and uplifted us by his beautiful letters'.

In February 1932, because of work on his thesis at Easter, he obtained permission to visit Haifa in the mid-term break. He was accompanied by his brother and Mr. Faizi, 'and Hasan believed that it was the first occasion on which pilgrimage had included a visit to the newly-restored Mansion of Bahjí. He never met Shoghi Effendi again'. (Moojan Momen)

II. The British Isles

In September 1932, following his studies in Beirut, 'Hasan came to London armed with a letter of recommendation from his professor', Dr. Roger H. Soltan, to Prof. Harold Laski at the London School of Economics, and was accepted as a post-graduate student. He read Diplomatic History, with special reference to the relations of the European Powers to the Persian Gulf States, and in 1935 received his M.Sc. (Econ.). He pursued his studies in the field of British Public Opinion on Franco-German Relations after World War I, but his thesis for a doctorate was delayed by the difficulty of finding a suitable supervisor and the outbreak of the Second World War cut short his university career.

Within months of his arrival in London, Hasan was elected at Ridván 1933 to

the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the British Isles and also to the London Spiritual Assembly. Administration was little past its infancy in Britain at the time of Hasan's arrival. An editorial note in *Unfolding Destiny*, a collection of the Guardian's letters to the British Bahá'í Community, states that from the end of 1930 until early 1934 only five or six short meetings per year were recorded in the 'scanty Minutes of the National Assembly' and no records exist of messages from the Guardian.

It was at this juncture that Hasan was faced with a decision that would change the pattern of his life. He had published in a Persian newspaper an article on the current political

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situation in Europe, but on 8 February 1934 the Guardian addressed him through his secretary, expressing astonishment, after his own 'repeated and emphatic warnings to the friends that they should refrain from participating whether directly or indirectly in any political activity ... " We cannot know what thoughts and emotions may have disquieted this young scholar, standing at the threshold of a beckoning career, but the nature of his reply to the Guardian is attested in a long and significant letter from Shoghi Effendi dated 2 March:

' ... He was much impressed by your immediate response ... and he has deeply appreciated the firm decision you have taken not to enter any political or diplomatic career. He is fully conscious of the sacrifices you have accepted to undergo for the sake of maintaining the integrity of the Teachings. For the field of work which your parents wanted you to enter was one in which you had great possibilities of progress, and you might have even had a chance to attain the position which your father had occupied in the ministry. But you can be certain that the example you have set before the friends by refusing to meddle in any sort of political activity is one which all of them will appreciate and through which they will be encouraged to suffer even greater sacrifices. The Cause, indeed, can progress only through the continued and whole-hearted sacrifices of the believers. And it is on young, intelligent and well-educated Bahá'ís like yourself that has been laid the chief responsibility of demonstrating to the friends and to the non-believers alike, that the spirit of heroism, of loyalty and of unqualified devotion to the Faith is more than ever animating the faithful and is moulding and shaping their lives ... And I am sure that you fully realize that nothing short of such an attitude can effectively maintain the unity of the Faith and insure the stability and the efficient working of its new-born institutions.' (through his secretary)

A plan then in Hasan's mind, to work in the offices of the League of Nations in Geneva, was fully approved by Shoghi Effendi provided the work would be 'purely administrative', but his closing advice was to retain his membership 'both in the N.S.A. and in the London Assembly. Your cooperation has been greatly appreciated by all our English friends, and it is hoped that this will encourage you to continue working with them.' (through his secretary) Many years later, when Hasan's handsome inheritance of properties and wealth in

Írán offered him every comfort and ease of living in that country, he explained to Dr. Iraj Ayman why he did not take this up. 'I am only interested in serving the Cause wherever the beloved Guardian wants me to serve and I am not a bit interested in all that belongs to me in Írán.' For a quarter of a century he would devote himself to the progress of the Faith in the British Isles, until his responsibilities as a Hand of the Cause would call him to wider fields. Already by 1935 his presence in London was 'a tremendous and unique help to the friends' and he had 'indeed, contributed a valuable share towards the expansion and consolidation of the Movement not only in London but in some other parts of England as well.' (secretary of the Guardian, probably writing personally)

The year 1936 signalled a marked increase of Bahá'í activities, when a young English Bahá'í, David Hofman, arrived in the spring from America where he had experienced various aspects of the evolving Administrative Order. He became secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly at Ridván of that year and Hasan assistant secretary. For a good many years these two co-operated in manifold services to the Cause they both loved, together with others whose names are now part of Bahá'í history in the British Isles.

In rapid succession during the few years before the outbreak of war in September 1939, a teaching campaign throughout England was inaugurated (1936), the first official Bahá'í Summer School was held, the Bahá'í Journal was initiated, an annual mid-winter National Teaching Conference began, the Publishing Trust was established and issued its first two publications in 1938, a monthly magazine, *New World Order*, was founded (1939), and the long-sought legal incorporation of the N.S.A. was achieved in August 1939, Hasan being one of the nine signatories as a 'research student'. In all of these national activities Hasan took an active part, not only as an officer of the N.S.A., but often as Convention chairman, Summer School organizer and teacher, a member of the Reviewing Commit-

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tee, an active participant at Teaching Conference, a contributor to *New World Order*, and a travelling teacher in England both north and south. At the same time he was a member of the London Assembly and the London Bahá'í Youth Group which earned the congratulations of the Guardian for its 'splendid achievements' and he was 'acclaimed as a first-rate speaker'. He has been described in those early years by several who knew him. 'He was young, attractive and very courteous ... " 'Nobody was more patient, considerate, informative and humorous ... He was both gentle and wise ... His temperament was quiet and conciliatory.' ' ... on a boy of nine his absolute calm, and the love that poured out when he spoke ... made an indelible impression ... One grew up under his patience, kindness, wisdom and love ... " (Ursula Samandarí, Louis Ross-Enfield and Hugh McKinley in that order)

Often he and Molly Brown, his future wife, came to Bahá'í firesides and social occasions, including evenings at the home of Lady Blomfield. 'On every

occasion Hasan and Molly brought out the best in everyone.' He 'had a deep love and respect for the early believers in the British community, such as beloved Lady Blomfield, dear old and gallant Miss Gamble, Mme Scaramucci, Mrs. George and Mrs. Slade, and they in turn had a deep affection for him. Another very touching relationship was with darling Mr. Azgarzadeh ... He used to give Persian Feasts, and Hasan was always the honoured guest.' (Louis Ross-Enfield, Ursula Samandarí)

As war loomed on the horizon, Shoghi Effendi expressed his delight 'with the work which is being so energetically conducted, ... and particularly by their national elected representatives whose magnificent efforts, courage and perseverance deserve the highest praise ... ' (10 February 1939) The Guardian's love and concern for the English Bahá'ís was never more evident than during the years of the Second World War, as his more than threescore messages during these years attest. The friends, for their part, prosecuted their teaching campaign with increasing vigour and in ever-widening circles despite 'the unprecedented calamities and confusion that now afflict their country'. (Shoghi Effendi, 22 November 1940) Hasan had become vice-chairman of the National Assembly at Ridván 1940 and that summer moved with the newly-created Persian Section of the B.B.C., to which he had been appointed as a senior member, to Evesham in Worcestershire where broadcasting was carried on until August 1942 when the Department returned to London. His appointment had assured his continued residence in England when war began. We are indebted to Mrs. Balyúzí and Abbas Dehkan, whom he invited to join the B.B.C., for a description of his professional work, which included a great deal of original writing of special features such as talks on English writers and history, translating English poetry and short stories, giving talks on current affairs, translating and announcing routine news bulletins (later taken over by junior staff), writing plays and performing in them, assisting in productions of Shakespeare, and presenting a series of English by Radio. He resigned from the B.B.C. in 1958, but continued for some years with particular assignments. A three-month tour of duty in Írán in 1956 for the B.B.C. enabled him to attend to family affairs in and near Shíráz after the death of his mother, visit Isfahán and stay a few days in Tihrán where, as chairman of the British National Assembly, he made contact with its sister Assembly in Írán. It was his first visit since he had left his homeland as a youth, and it was to be his last.

Dr. Iraj Ayman has given the following fascinating glimpse of Hasan in his professional career. Among his colleagues were several distinguished Iranian scholars and writers, men such as Mujtabá Mínuví, Mas'úd Farzád and Gulchín. He himself produced more than a thousand radio programmes on Írán and its history and literature, and some of his translations of English literature have become part of modern Persian literature. He contributed to the development of the Persian language, as well, by coining many words now commonly used in Írán in the translation of modern terms, and he also 'made new and different uses of old words to convey new meanings'. Indeed, 'his style, his mastery of and his special approach to Persian were unique and

highly appreciated' by Iranian writers.

It was during this period that Hasan wrote *A Guide to the Administrative Order* (1941)

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and gave invaluable assistance to the editor of *The Chosen Highway* by Lady Blomfield, whose death on 31 December 1939 had 'robbed the Cause in England' of her 'ready and invaluable support'. (Shoghi Effendi through his secretary, 18 February 1940)

In June 1941 Hasan and Mary (Molly) Brown were married in the Bahá'í Centre in Torquay. The daughter of Kathleen Brown (later, Lady Hornell), who was one of England's most steadfast and active Bahá'ís, Molly had been a member of the Sadler's Wells Ballet before marriage. Their first son, Hushang, was born in Evesham in 1942 and during the next years there were four other sons, Robert, Felix, Richard and Simeon. 'A girl has not been born into our family for two hundred years,' Hasan told Alma Gregory.

Molly had many gifts and, on a number of occasions, assisted Hasan in the production of dramatic scripts about the Faith which he or Mary Basil Hall had written, creating 'performances of moving distinction'. (Hugh McKinley) And 'when he and Molly and their children came to Summer School they brought a joyous atmosphere'. (Ursula Samandarí) No doubt Hasan recognized the unequal share which fell to Molly, as she gave herself to the care and rearing of their young family. 'So gifted herself, she devoted her life to enable others to express their gifts.' (ibid.) But it was a willing choice, for Molly preferred, she has said, her role at home to a more public one. It can truly be said that they sustained and complimented each other throughout the nearly forty years of marriage. A friend who visited them in 1979 was 'much touched by the love and consideration which they showed for each other. I realized that he could not do his vastly important work without her devoted care.' (O. Z. Whitehead) And after his passing Molly described herself as fortified 'against any and every pressure' by 'his love, forethought, wisdom and discernment'.

Hasan, for his part, deeply cherished his sons, prayed for their spiritual progress, took pride in their scholarly achievements, but was prevented by his work schedule with the B.B.C. and his Bahá'í responsibilities from spending much time with them. 'What was I to do?' was his sad lament shortly before his death.

In 1942 Hasan became chairman of the N.S.A., a post to which he was elected annually for seventeen years (excluding 1943-1944). 'Who that ever served on the N.S.A. with him ... can ever forget his unending, loving patience, his deep sympathy and his profound wisdom and his lovable hilarity? ... Who can ever forget the lunch, tea and supper breaks of N.S.A. meetings with beloved Hasan entertaining us with his light-hearted stories and anecdotes? ... He was such a perfect chairman,' wrote Ursula Samandarí, 'that I could never believe the British Community could be the same' when, in 1960, he retired from membership.

And Philip Hainsworth has added: ' ... I can remember only the joy of those meetings, an eagerness and excitement which I never seem to have recaptured'; Hasan was 'a very great gentle man who influenced my Bahá'í life in a way he probably never suspected'.

Although the most demanding of Hasan's time and energy, his N.S.A. service was by no means all he was doing. Over the years he was often chairman of the Annual Convention and of the London Spiritual Assembly. When special committees were formed, whether to formulate publishing policy (1942) or plan press publicity for the completion of the exterior of the Bahá'í Temple in Wilmette (1943), or prepare a history of the Faith in the British Isles for the 1944 Centenary, or examine how to promote the Six Year Plan (1944), Hasan was secretary or member. He accepted whatever needed doing, for years addressing and dispatching the Bahá'í Journal to the national community. And always he spoke, at Summer Schools, the annual Teaching Conferences, public meetings and firesides. 'I was once chairman at Summer School when he spoke about 'Abdu'l-Bahá; there was not a dry-eyed member of the audience.' (Ursula Samandarí)

Indeed, the record of his services on national committees, from 1943 to 1960, and often for several years, is daunting to the reader. Reviewing, New World Order, Literature (secretary), Archives (eleven years), National Contacts and Public Relations, National Scripts, Summer School Management and Programme, Assembly Development, Persian, Consolidation, National Centenary (1953, chairman), Visual Aids, European and Asian Teaching (chairman for four years), Instal-

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lation and Maintenance plus Reception Committees for the Hazíratu'l-Quds (1955-1956), Hazíratu'l-Quds (1956-1957) — the very names elicit memories of the development of the British Bahá'í community.

Although listed as a member of the newly-appointed Persian Committee only for four years (between 1950 and 1956), Hasan was always in close touch with the young Persians who came to Britain for education. 'It is clear that he exerted a most beneficial influence on all the Persian friends. He was beloved by them and he encouraged their participation in Bahá'í activities.' (Ursula Samandarí) At Summer Schools, which he regularly attended, 'he would either conduct sessions in Persian or would brief Persian friends after each session. On a number of occasions he mentioned that the frequency and amount of references to him by Persian believers' exceeded those of the N.S.A. 'Once I asked him how he could attend to all these different and almost contradictory engagements. He pointed to his chair and desk in the corner of the room in the old apartment' where they were living and said, "'many nights I sit there all night and do not go to bed". I specially verified this with Molly and Lady Hornell ... I asked him how he could subject himself to such continuous hardship' and he replied, 'whenever I think of what our beloved Guardian is doing for us I am ashamed of how little we are doing in response and sleep

escapes my eyes'. (Iraj Ayman) An English believer of early days remembered: 'I used to go with him and other Persian students on picnics ... We had great times together. He was always witty with inborn gentleness, that shone from his eyes.' (Louis Ross-Enfield) And a Persian Bahá'í, Habíb Hazari, who came to England in 1950 has described what he must have meant to them all: 'I was showered by his kindness, generosity and affection.' About 1951 'I wrote to the Guardian and said, "His inspiration in serving the Faith is this verse of the Aqdas: 'Observe My commandments for the love of My beauty.' ... He is kind to everyone, and is the best and closest friend and counsellor to the Bahá'í friends ... " A few weeks later I received a letter from Dr. Hakím, including "What you have said about the Afnán, Hasan Muvaqqar Balyúzí, was also noted by the Guardian, who said, 'Write [to Habíb]: "Yes, you are right." ' Then he said: 'I pray for him, he can be sure.' " '

As early as Ridván 1943 the Guardian directed the thoughts of the British Bahá'ís to the Centenary of the Declaration of the Báb. He was anxious that 'the British Bahá'ís should ... demonstrate to the public and to their fellow believers, the vitality of their community and the marked advancement it has made of late.' (through his secretary, 17 June 1943) Hasan was chairman of the Centenary Committee and secretary of the committee which produced *The Centenary of a World Faith*, subtitled 'The History of the Bahá'í Faith and Its Development in the British Isles.' It was 'most excellently gotten out and not only well written but calculated to arouse the interest of the reader and impress him with the true stature of our World Faith'. (Shoghi Effendi through his secretary, 12 August 1944) During the week-long programme opened by Sir Ronald Storrs at the Centenary Exhibition, a review of Bahá'í history in dramatized form was presented by Hasan, who was also one of the speakers at the large public meeting on 23 May. The 'patient efforts and sacrifices of the members of the N.S.A., and all those who contributed to the marked success of the Centenary celebrations ... brought happiness to his often heavily over-burdened heart,' wrote the Guardian's secretary in the same letter.

It was during the historic Convention of that week that the delegates resolved to inaugurate a Six Year Plan for teaching and turned to the Guardian to fix the goal. His reply on 25 May signaled a great new phase for the British community: **WELCOME SPONTANEOUS DECISION. ADVISE FORMATION NINETEEN SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES SPREAD OVER ENGLAND WALES SCOTLAND NORTHERN IRELAND AND EIRE ...** At that time there were no believers in the British Isles beyond England except George Townshend!

Throughout the Six Year Plan Hasan's administrative burdens were in no way lessened; indeed, the claims on the N.S.A. and its officers multiplied as the Plan progressed and the challenge to the community intensified. At the Teaching Conference of February 1946, a turning-point for the Plan when the nine goal towns of the Initial Phase were chosen, the N.S.A. session lifted the friends to a 'realm of

dedication and spiritual resolution, which was immeasurably reinforced by Hasan Balyúzi's inspired message'. There are reports of his speaking in Northampton, Torquay, Exeter, Leeds, and he is on the 'honour roll' of travelling teachers, participating fully in the Summer Schools which were so crucial to winning the Plan, and chairing the 1949 Teaching Conference, attended by Mrs. Amelia Collins, when 'the very room seemed to vibrate with the power of the Cause'. And then, following a year of deep anxiety, at the victory Convention of 1950 'our dear, perennial Hasan Balyúzi read the cable, and so the whole tone of Convention was set'. HEART FLOODED JOY were the Guardian's opening words; it was a moment no one present will ever forget.

Never one to pause in his compelling vision of the ultimate triumph of the Faith, the Guardian in this same message called on the British community to BRACE ITSELF EMBARK AFTER ONE YEAR RESPITE YET ANOTHER HISTORIC UNDERTAKING, and he sketched the outlines of the Two Year Plan or African Campaign. It was the first stage in the Divine Plan in which several National Assemblies would march together, and the British N.S.A.'s trust was to be 'the consultative body for all African territories' with whom 'the other National Assemblies should keep in close touch ... " The time was indeed short until the centenary in 1953 of the birth of Bahá'u'lláh's prophetic mission in the Síyáh-Chál. Yet despite the brevity of the Two Year Plan it was laden with unimagined significances, first indicated by Shoghi Effendi on 16 January 1951 when in four score words he unveiled the events of the next thirty years and far beyond.

The African Teaching Conference, in which 123 African Bahá'ís of some thirty tribes participated with many other believers, was the first of four Intercontinental Conferences convened in 1953. It was the British N.S.A.'s responsibility to plan it, in co-operation with the five other National Assemblies of the Plan, and its chairman's responsibility to convene it. In the event, Hasan and John and Dorothy Ferraby, all N.S.A. officers, attended this unique Conference which, with the three to follow, launched the FATE-LADEN, SOUL-STIRRING, DECADE-LONG, WORLD-EMBRACING SPIRITUAL CRUSADE known as the Ten Year Plan. It was Hasan's first mission overseas, during which he presided over all sessions, spoke at the public meeting in Makerere University College, and participated in the two consultations of the N.S.A. representatives with the Hands of the Cause.

Once again the Guardian, in his long cablegram to the 1953 British Bahá'í Convention, after warmly congratulating the delegates ON MAGNIFICENT VICTORIES ACHIEVED AFRICAN CONTINENT EXCEEDING HIGHEST HOPES, announced his forward plans for the TRIUMPHANT RICHLY BLESSED BRITISH NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY [to] PARTICIPATE ELEVEN SISTER NATIONAL ASSEMBLIES EAST WEST IMPENDING WORLD SPIRITUAL CRUSADE ... Their fourteen areas of responsibility beyond their ISLAND HOME were breathtaking, but without hesitation the Convention pledged TOTAL DEDICATION CONSECRATION UNWAVERING SERVICE CONFIDENT DIVINE HOSTS WILL REINFORCE OUR EFFORTS IN PROPORTION OUR STEADFASTNESS COVENANT ... We are grateful to the Hand of the Cause Dr. Ugo Giachery for a description of Hasan

at this time: 'The first time I met him was in 1953 at the Stockholm Conference; he was young, elegant, soft-spoken, gentle and graceful. His luxuriant black hair enhanced the handsomeness of his countenance; to me he appeared the embodiment of the perfect Persian aristocrat. His linguistic ability was truly superb ... In Stockholm he was happy and exuberant, and Angeline and I became his good friends.'

Hasan carried great responsibilities in the World Crusade for, apart from his chairmanship of the N.S.A. during the first seven years, he served on five national committees including chairmanship (1953-1957) of the European and Asian Teaching Committee which had under its wing the Knights of Bahá'u'lláh opening seven European goals and consolidation of the Faith in Eire and Hong Kong. Barbara Lewis, its secretary, recalls Hasan's chairmanship: 'I remember ... how much I learnt about Bahá'í affairs, and how to handle them, from his loving and wise direction of the Committee ... He was, I felt, a man of great stature, and of outstanding qualities, and these he brought to bear in his guidance to the Committee during consultation about the well-being of those Knights of Bahá'u'lláh

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with whom we were concerned ... His has been a lasting influence on me throughout the thirty years I've been a Bahá'í.'

One ought to remember as well his young family of five sons, the eldest eleven when the Ten Year Plan began. And for almost seventeen years he accepted into his home and care his young relative, Farhang Afnan. 'From the moment when I first saw him [September 1951], I was enraptured by his kindness, gentleness and understanding. As time passed, I came to realise more and more what a unique person he was ... He was like a many faceted precious jewel.'

The first year of the Crusade elicited an expression of the Guardian's pride in the British community's RECENT ACHIEVEMENTS; all their overseas goals had been filled and their Local Assemblies at home maintained. At the same time a strenuous search was being pursued for a National Hazíratu'l-Quds in London. Over thirty properties were considered and many viewed before success, hailed by the Guardian as a HISTORIC ACHIEVEMENT. (16 October 1954) Hasan and two Hands of the Cause, Dr. Grossmann and Mr. Ioas, spoke during the Teaching Conference and Dedication held on 15 January 1955.

Hasan's next mission overseas occurred at Ridván 1956 when as N.S.A. chairman he convened in Kampala, Uganda, the first Convention of the Bahá'ís of Central and East Africa, meeting for the election of their own Regional Spiritual Assembly only five years after the inception of the African Campaign. 'My heart brims with joy and my soul is uplifted with thankfulness', were the Guardian's words as he greeted the four African Conventions, paying a 'warm and heartfelt tribute' to all who had contributed to 'so colossal an enterprise', including the members of the six National Assemblies supporting the work, and appealing to them 'not to abandon these fledgling African Bahá'í communities ... ' Hasan performed other services in Kampala, including an introductory talk

for the viewing of the cloak of Bahá'u'lláh, a press interview and radio broadcast. The following week-end in Leicester he described to the British Convention the exciting events of the African Convention, the 'staunchness and devotion' of the African Bahá'ís, the tremendous sacrifices of the pioneers, and some of the challenging problems confronting the new Regional Assembly. He had promised to raise their cry for assistance, and this he did most movingly in Leicester.

Ever since the appointment of the first contingent of the Hands of the Cause in December 1951, the British Bahá'ís had received the blessing and guidance of their OWN DEARLY LOVED MUCH ADMIRER GREATLY GIFTED OUTSTANDING HAND CAUSE GEORGE TOWNSHEND, thus extolled by the Guardian on the occasion of his death in March 1957. It was only five months later, in his last major letter to the National Assembly, that intriguing reference was made to their 'future Hands', a puzzle soon resolved in his message to the Bahá'í world, October 1957, in which eight more Hands were appointed. They included the chairman and secretary of the British National Assembly, Hasan Balyúzí, 'representing the Afnán', and John Ferraby. In reply to the N.S.A.'s cable of gratitude came these final words of the beloved Guardian to the British friends: CONFIDENT BRITISH COMMUNITY RICHLY DESERVES NEW HONOUR. SHOGHI. (11 October 1957)

III. The Hand of the Cause

Who could foresee at that joyous hour of the receipt of the October message from Shoghi Effendi, vibrant with his vision of the fourth phase of the World Crusade and the five Intercontinental Conferences to inaugurate it, that this would be his last call to action to the Bahá'í world, that the next messages would be from Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum announcing his passing on 4 November in London and his funeral a few days later? In her hour of indescribable shock and grief, with the need to convey this terrible news to the Bahá'ís, she thought, she has written, 'of the two British Hands of the Cause, so recently elevated to this high rank ... She first turned to Hasan Balyúzí, an Afnán cousin of his ... ' who, on arrival, telephoned John Ferraby; the Hand of the Cause Ugo Giachery was also called and arrived that night. From 'the very day of his ascension', these four Hands 'became responsible for all the pressing matters that had to be attended to in such a short space of time ...' The following afternoon Hasan and Dr. Giachery accompanied her 'to inspect possible sites for the grave ...

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within an hour's journey from London'. At twilight they found the spot we know, 'then proceeded to the undertaker's, to choose a suitable casket for the precious remains of the beloved Guardian'. The heart-rending details of these days, 4 to 9 November, a few lines of which are here quoted, have been recounted by Rúhíyyih Khánum in *The Passing of Shoghi Effendi* (The Bahá'í World, vol. XIII, pp. 207-225). It remains only to record, for this memorial article, that beside the grave, after the believers had filed by for over two hours to pay their respects, a prayer was chanted in Persian and then 'the

Afnán Hand of the Cause, Hasan Balyúzí, read the closing prayer in English'.

On 18 November, just a fortnight after the passing of the Guardian, twenty-six Hands of the Cause assembled in the Holy Land 'to consult together on the most tragic situation facing the Bahá'ís since the Ascension of 'Abdu'l-Bahá ... 'Next morning nine of them, including Hasan, were 'chosen by Rúhíyyih Khánúm to examine the Guardian's apartment'. Their 'thorough search' revealed 'that no Will or Testament of any nature whatsoever executed by Shoghi Effendi had been found', and this they 'reported to the entire body of the Hands assembled in the Mansion of Bahá'u'lláh in Bahjí ... " (ibid. p. 341)

Stunned, bewildered, overwhelmed at this discovery that no Will had been left, no heir appointed, the Hands had no choice but to accept the fate which had befallen them. As 'Chief Stewards' they must guide the Bahá'ís of the world for almost six years in the knowledge that they were bereft of infallible divine guidance until the Universal House of Justice could be brought into being. For a week, in session in the Mansion, they considered this situation. During this time the two Hands of the Cause, Hasan Balyúzí and Abu'l-Qásim Faizi, alternated in translating their consultations, in itself a wearying task for men already bowed by the events just past. The outcome of their deliberations was reported in a Proclamation which outlined a number of actions including the constitution of 'a body of nine Hands to serve at the Bahá'í World Centre' whom they later designated 'the Custodians of the Bahá'í World Faith'; among the nine was Hasan Balyúzí. The imprint of these three weeks on Hasan has been noted by Dr. Giachery, referring to his elevation to the rank of Hand of the Cause of God. 'His exultation, alas, was of very short duration. Twenty days later, the sudden demise of Shoghi Effendi dealt him a deadly blow, from which he never recovered.'

It was expected that Hasan, after settling his affairs in London, would come to Haifa to pursue this new and weighty responsibility, and preparation was made for him to share a room near the gate of the Master's House with his dear and old friend, Abu'l-Qásim Faizi, but at the last minute he was unable to return. He consulted his fellow Hands at the 1958 Conclave, hoping to find a solution to personal problems which prevented his service. It would seem that no path opened, for his replacement was announced in November 1959, but he continued as an alternate Hand in the Holy Land, spending weeks, sometimes months, in Haifa. Perhaps his outstanding contribution was in the preparation of archives for removal to the International Archives Building, when he assisted Rúhíyyih Khánúm for several months in 1959 and 1961. The Hand of the Cause 'Alí-Akbar Furútan and Mr. Ian Semple — both of whom, with the Hand of the Cause A. Q. Faizi, participated in this work — have described the importance of Hasan's part, when his wide knowledge enabled him to identify Tablets and other materials. 'I had met many Bahá'í scholars in Írán,' Mr. Furútan told the writer, 'but he was to me one of the outstanding figures ... I have never found in my life such a modest and humble man as Balyúzí ... I loved him dearly.' And Dr. Giachery has written: 'As Custodian at the World Centre, for some months, I had the good chance to know him better and ever more admire his noble

character and sterling qualities ... His life of service and spiritual obedience and sacrifices remains an effulgent example to emulate.' Though work may have filled their days in Haifa, nights at the Eastern Pilgrim House were lightened by Hasan's humour. He would quote a Persian expression and then laugh and laugh, Mr. Furútan recalled; while Mrs. Furútan described him as 'such a delightful man', recounting stories of Persia at table; he was 'really wonderful'. He also attended the annual Conclaves of the Hands of the Cause at

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the World Centre, including the one in 1963 which opened in Haifa in April before the election of the Universal House of Justice and closed in London in the week following the World Congress. As in 1957 he translated a great part of the sessions.

From the hour of his appointment as Hand of the Cause, he devoted his energies to the successful consummation of the Guardian's Crusade, then nearly half-way to its close. 'There is much that only the future can reveal,' he wrote on his return from the first Conclave. 'But still through this dark night of our souls, there beams powerful and luminous as ever, the floodlight of the Guardian's guidance ... He has left us all that we need to carry us to the "Most Great Jubilee", and beyond to the day where once again the gates of Divine guidance will be opened and the Universal House of Justice ... will come to be.' And he added to this sentence, truly a key to his motivation as a Bahá'í, frequently mentioned by him and observed by others over the years: 'If only we live the words of the Master's prayer, Make me as dust in the pathway of Thy loved ones, our victory is secure.' (Bahá'í Journal, January 1958)

Within a week after receipt in Britain of the Proclamation of the Hands, Hasan met representatives from all Local Assemblies and major national committees in the Hazíratu'l-Quds to explain the situation in the Faith, and did so again in January at the Annual Teaching Conference in Leeds when his talk 'was moving beyond the power of words could describe'. (Bahá'í Journal, February 1958) He attended the opening of the Bahá'í Centre in Leicester in mid-February, spoke at week-end schools in Manchester, Cambridge and Brighton, and was elected an officer of Convention at Ridván and once again to the National Spiritual Assembly.

Meanwhile, a Conference of the European Hands with their two Auxiliary Boards (the Protection Board but recently formed) was held in Berne in February 1958. For Hasan it was the first of ten such Conferences he attended between 1958 and June 1964, always contributing much wise and practical advice and sharing chairmanship with his fellow Hands. Concerning these Conferences, which often included members of the European National Spiritual Assemblies, the International Bahá'í Council noted their 'immense value to the work on that continent ... the experience of a number of Bahá'í institutions consulting together in this way for the service of the Cause and their mutual help, is unforgettably moving.' (Bahá'í Journal, November 1961) Two of the Conferences

coincided with greater events: the Frankfurt International Teaching Conference in July 1958 and the laying of the cornerstone of the European Temple in November 1960. Hasan participated in both events, so intimately related to the vision and instructions of the Guardian. 'His love for the Guardian was extraordinary,' Mr. Furútan has said of his fellow Hand. 'He was always speaking of him, quoting him. His main theme, when I was with him, was the Guardian.' And so it was at the close of the Frankfurt Conference when Hasan, with the other Hands of the Cause, bade farewell to the believers. 'What more can I say? There are many things I do not know, but one thing I do know. Now is the time to show our faithfulness to our beloved Guardian.'

Hasan's personal relationship with Auxiliary Board members in the British Isles, as a European Hand of the Cause, must also be mentioned. From the experience of two such members, it can be said that he was prompt and business-like in replying to their reports, shared these with his fellow Hands and took action as needed, dealt with their needs whether financial or for guidance, always encouraged them, trusted their judgement, and wrote in an unassuming spirit, at times signing himself 'Gratefully and lovingly in His Fellowship'.

Yet another aspect of Hasan's international service was his journey in April 1961 to Ecuador and Peru, where he represented the World Centre at the first Conventions of their national Bahá'í communities. A report from Peru expressed gratitude for his 'patient explanations, his dignified, loving manner and wonderful sense of humour ... ' (Bahá'í News, no. 364, p.4) Following the first elections of these National Spiritual Assemblies, Hasan went north to cross Canada during May. Here, in addition to meeting the friends, he visited a number of Indian Reserves, including Indians of Ontario, the Poorman Reserve in Saskatchewan where he

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was honoured by a pow-wow, the Muscowpetung Reserve, the Peigan Reserve in Alberta, and Indians of British Columbia. His talks were 'simple and direct', appealing 'to the hearts of the many who came to hear him'. (ibid. no. 366, p. 9) Later he described these meetings as 'very wonderful', commending to British Bahá'ís the initiative of individuals upon whom 'so much depends', and expressing his confidence in the rapid acceptance of the Faith by Indians. Again in 1962 Hasan attend first National Conventions, this time in Holland and Denmark, as representative of the World Centre.

Were one to analyse, year by year, Hasan's travels to three continents in his first six years as a Hand of the Cause, and couple his schedule with one detailing his continuous activities within the British Isles in accordance with his habitual pattern in past decades, his perseverance in service to the Guardian's Crusade would stand out brilliantly. Records show his attendance at the annual Teaching Conferences of 1959, 1960 and 1962; his visits in June and July 1960 to Bangor (Northern Ireland), Edinburgh and Manchester and his meeting with Bahá'ís of the Southern Region; his stirring review at the 1960

Convention of British Bahá'í history as bearing on present responsibilities; his course on the Covenant at the Harlech Summer School of 1960 when, with the Hand of the Cause Adelbert Mühlischlegel 'their radiant personalities filled our days'; his address for the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Master's visit to England at the National Celebration in London, September 1961, sharing the platform with the Hand of the Cause Leroy Ioas; a similar Celebration in Edinburgh in January 1963 of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's visit there, addressed by Hasan and Dr. Mühlischlegel; and a number of important messages which he wrote to the British Bahá'ís in these years. Sadly, by 1960 the problem of recurring ill health frequently appears. For four months, March to June 1962, he was unable to meet the National Assembly as was his wont, following his resignation from this body in February 1960 in order better to contribute to the development of the Institution of the Hands of the Cause of God, one of the goals of the Ten Year Crusade. In August 1962 he entered hospital for an operation on his right shoulder, and from 1963 he had to contend repeatedly with various kinds of illness and injury which greatly taxed his strength. Yet some of his finest contributions occurred in these years.

Hasan had served for twenty-seven continuous years as a member of the National Spiritual Assembly and for seventeen years as its chairman, seven of these during the exacting claims of the World Crusade. To the regret but with the affection and gratitude of his fellow members, 'who felt truly bereft at losing him', he had withdrawn from the Assembly, offering however to consult with them as a Hand whenever he was in England. This he did when his health permitted, often discussing ten or twelve subjects at a meeting, or when absent sending his suggestions. In addition, he was ever ready to guide and advise the Assembly officers between meetings. In its 1962 report to Convention, the N.S.A. wrote that it 'has had the benefit of numerous consultations with Hasan Balyúzí and is deeply grateful to him for keeping so closely in touch with the work of the British Community'. Their close association with him is also mentioned in 1964, 1966, 1967 and 1969.

Counsellor Betty Reed, who became National Secretary in January 1961, has written: 'For there were two aspects of Hasan's assistance; one was his constant help to the National Assembly, and the other his invaluable guidance and advice to the Officers ... He followed the work of the National Assembly carefully, and went to considerable trouble to help keep the Assembly on course ... Hasan had taught us to study every single word in Shoghi Effendi's letters ... and the National Assembly continued to give the same close attention to the letters of the Universal House of Justice, which was reflected in the Assembly's direction of the Nine Year Plan ... ' Mrs. Reed cites, in particular, as does John Long, then Chairman of the N.S.A., Hasan's guidance during the imprisonment of Bahá'ís in Morocco, when 'the Officers were constantly in touch' with him, as well as his encouragement to give priority to pioneering overseas despite needs on the Home Front, and this was done both for Europe in 1960 and Australia in 1961. And she continues, '... reflections over the last thirteen years of travel in Europe have convinced me of the great

debt the British Community owes to Hasan Balyúzí. We came through the Six Year Plan, the Africa Campaign, the Ten Year Crusade, and the Nine Year Plan in one steady, continuous upward curve, never doubting that goals set by the beloved Guardian or the Universal House of Justice could be won — we didn't talk about the Power of Bahá'u'lláh, we just experienced it, thought it a natural Bahá'í phenomenon, and that we had learned from Hasan.'

Counsellor Dorothy Ferraby, also an officer of the National Spiritual Assembly for many years until she joined her husband, the Hand of the Cause John Ferraby, in Haifa in 1960, came to the same conclusion after more than a quarter of a century in joint service with Hasan: 'We worked together, he as chairman and I as secretary of the Youth Group. Later we worked together closely and harmoniously on the London Assembly and the National Assembly ... In all my association with him he was a tremendous support, a wise guide and counsellor about whatever we were involved in. Nobody will ever be able to estimate how much the Faith in England owes to him.'

Indeed, for many years he was 'rained under', in his own words, by the sheer volume of his correspondence, not only with institutions of the Faith but with the many believers who turned to him whether in pursuit of their services to Bahá'u'lláh, or in test, difficulty or sorrow. His understanding, wise counsel and sympathy knew no bounds.

For most Bahá'ís their last sight of Hasan Balyúzí was in 1963, for after the World Congress in the Royal Albert Hall he rarely went among them. The beloved Guardian's Crusade seemed to have taken all his strength. Few will forget his closing address in the first session of the Congress and his opening triumphant words from the Master, O Bahá'u'lláh, What hast Thou done? O Bahá'u'lláh, May my life be sacrificed for Thee! In the compass of this one talk he recalled the entire history of the Faith, held out the vision of even greater crusades to come, and closed by extolling the Crusade whose victory the World Congress celebrated as most precious of all, for it was 'launched by our beloved Shoghi Effendi'.

IV. Scholar and Writer

From the time of his appointment as a Hand of the Cause in October 1957 Hasan had devoted himself to his high calling, bearing as well until Ridván 1960 a great and continuous responsibility as chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly during the intensive activities of the Ten Year Crusade. With his fellow Hands he had borne the crushing blow of the death of the Guardian, followed by the heart-numbing shock that he had left no heir. He had served for the first two years thereafter as one of the nine Custodians of the Faith at the World Centre, and had travelled to Haifa whenever the claims of his family permitted. He had made other trips to Haifa to assist with the development of the International Archives, and had attended the annual Conclaves of the Hands at Bahjí. He had participated as a Hand in the European Conferences with Board members and National Spiritual Assemblies, unstintingly sharing his knowledge

and wisdom and guiding, with other Hands, the proceedings of these important gatherings. He had represented the World Centre in 1961 and 1962 at the first Conventions in Ecuador, Peru, Holland and Denmark, and had travelled across Canada especially visiting Indian Reserves. He had been present in 1963 at the first World Convention in Haifa and in London a few days later had addressed the opening session of the World Congress. He had continued to pour out his love and guidance to the British Bahá'í Community and had consulted frequently with their National Assembly.

But these six crowded years had taken their toll. Exhausted, beset by dire financial problems, suffering almost continuous physical pain and mental and spiritual stress, always sensitive to the sufferings of others and to negative influences affecting the Faith, he could no longer endure the problems with which, as a Hand of the Cause, he was perpetually assailed. His only recourse in the period following the World Congress was to close the door on such problems, attend no more gatherings whether in Britain, Europe or Haifa, leave his letters unanswered and at times unopened, and receive but few of those who sought to meet him.¹ Such a drastic

¹ He did, however, continue to guide the National Spiritual Assembly and Board members and attended two sessions of the European Conference of the Hands with their Boards in London, June 1964.

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course, although any other was beyond his strength, filled his mind with forebodings of guilt for his wasted days and abdication of his responsibilities as a Hand. Yet, all unrecognized, another path was about to open before him, another way of service as a Hand which the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá had delineated: 'to promote learning ... '

As long ago as June 1938 his short biography of Bahá'u'lláh had been published, attracting the attention of Shoghi Effendi who expressed his hope 'that the two companion essays on the Báb and the Master ... will be soon completed ... as he feels they can be of a powerful help to the friends in their teaching work'. (Unfolding Destiny, p. 122) Hasan has described how he 'set about organizing an outline for a book on the life of 'Abdu'l-Bahá' and why this project was halted and 'not resumed until more than a score of years had passed'. (Foreword to 'Abdu'l-Bahá) It was in 1960 that he took up his work again with the idea of a trilogy on the three Central Figures of the Faith. His original booklet, surely a literary gem, was amplified with an invaluable essay on the Manifestations of God and published at Ridván 1963 as Bahá'u'lláh, the first of his trilogy. Perforce the project had suffered postponement in those overburdened years as the World Crusade drew to a close, and even after the Crusade had ended and his yearning to write his biography on the Master filled him with a kind of desperation, it was not until 1965 that he turned his full attention to writing. His last decade would see the publication of five major literary works in English and he would leave as well several manuscripts for posthumous publication. He had found at last, after those

testing months when he felt himself burned out and impotent, yet never yielding his trust in Bahá'u'lláh's mercy and succour, a career for which all his study, experience and devotion had prepared him. From 1965 onwards his labours were ceaseless and his achievements enriched the literature of the Faith, inspired youthful Bahá'í scholars, and increased the knowledge of all who turned to his books.

Although he lived with pain to the end — angina, hiatus hernia and high blood pressure in his last five years — ill health endowed him with the need for retirement from public activities and gave him the privacy a writer requires. In 1971 and 1973, upon receiving signed copies of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and The Báb, respectively, the Universal House of Justice addressed to Hasan two letters in which he 'took great pleasure', being 'enormously grateful' for their support and encouragement. (Molly Balyúzi, through their son Robert) 'Your book is a splendid addition to the literature of the Cause', they wrote, 'and eloquent testimony to your wisdom in concentrating on such scholarly activity.' (5 December 1971) And later, 'We certainly hope that nothing will prevent you from continuing your invaluable and devoted labours, whose results are of such infinite value in increasing the knowledge and deepening the understanding of the believers.' (22 April 1973)

Hasan has stated that the delay in completing the trilogy was the result of his strong conviction 'that Professor Edward Granville Browne's connections with the Faith of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh had to be explored and explained'. His first conception was to include this in his life of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, but realizing 'that a diversion of that magnitude was inappropriate' he prepared this material for separate publication, rewriting it three times, and it was published in 1970. The importance of this scholarly work, proving its value from the first, may well be fully recognized only in future, for, in the words of the Universal House of Justice, it 'will surely go a long way to fulfil the beloved Guardian's expressed wish that " ... the mind of the intellectual would be freed of these wrong conceptions" '. (8 October 1969) In 1977 Hasan completed a Persian manuscript on the same theme, of greater length, quoting the text of the Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and copied in his own handwriting. (Its publication has been postponed because of recent events in Írán.)

Hasan's method of writing, he has said, was to work on two or three books at the same time, thereby relieving the fatigue of long hours of concentration on a single manuscript. Often it was his habit to continue far into the night, and so he would turn for refreshment from writing, to research, to reading for background. It is probable that his mind dwelt on the work in hand almost constantly. He was meticulous in assembling his materials, was known to spend three days in the deter-

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mination of a single date, and gave most careful attention to the transliteration of Persian, Arabic and Turkish names whose pronunciation could vary according to region. All his books were submitted in his own handwriting,

and even quotations were copied by hand to ensure that his choice of deletions would be followed.

From the very beginning he had the invaluable assistance of his cousin, Abu'l-Qásim Afnán, Custodian of the House of the Báb, whose 'very generous aid in my research' Hasan acknowledged in his book on E. G. Browne. His diligence in obtaining and delivering materials to Hasan for each of his books is beyond all praise, as illustrated by this extract from a 1974 letter from Hasan: 'Afnán has brought me masses of photostats and original documents ... there is enough material to make the book on the Báb double its present size, and for a massive book on the Life of Bahá'u'lláh.'

In his later years it was Hasan's dream to have a research assistant, one who could spend part of each day with him. This was not to be, but instead from 1972 a young scholar and medical student, Moojan Momen, served him with great devotion in such time as he could spare. His 'assiduous and able research' was acknowledged by Hasan with profound gratitude in his preface to Bahá'u'lláh, The King of Glory; his 'help and assistance to me have been of inestimable value'. By appointing him one of his three Literary Executors and Trustees of the Afnán Library, Hasan demonstrated his confidence in Dr. Momen.

Hasan's knowledge of the Faith, of Persian history, literature and culture, of nineteenth-and twentieth-century Írán and its leading figures, and of current developments in the world, whether political, artistic or literary, was remarkable. Here are a few passages from a letter from Dr. Iraj Ayman: although 'not personally known to the rank and file of the friends in Írán ... [he] was much better known and respected amongst upper class intelligentsia, especially scholars and intellectuals either educated in England or engaged in Iranian studies. He was regarded as an authority ... a leading scholar ... Sitting in London he was more informed and well-versed in Persian studies than any other scholar I knew ... His fluency in Persian, English, Arabic and French as well as familiarity with some other languages had made him ... unique amongst orientologists ... If he is not yet openly acknowledged as a leading figure in contemporary Persian literature it is only because he was a well-known and active Bahá'í ... ' Even while engaged in his English writing, three of his books in Persian were published in Írán: The Story of Three Sisters (the Brontes), Half-Brothers (a collection of short stories translated from English), and Words in English Derived from Persian, in which 'he traced the roots of more than seven hundred English words'. (Iraj Ayman; titles translated by Mr. Balyúzí)

'You know better than I', wrote Farhang Afnan, 'what an encyclopaedic mind he had ... Whatever statement he made, he could substantiate it by not one but several independent and reputable sources.' And the Hand of the Cause A.-A. Furútan has said, 'Even when I met him in London at the end of his life, he was speaking of Iranians who were writing against the Faith, and I saw how wide was his knowledge of books published. But he made no mention of his own writings — so humble, modest and brilliant he was.'

Some have wondered why, after his trilogy was completed in 1973 and despite his plan for four volumes presenting the life and times of Bahá'u'lláh in their historical setting both in Írán and in the world at large, he should first write a volume entitled *Muhammad and the Course of Islám* (1976). The closing paragraph of this book shows how essential it was as a bridge to the 'vast study' he was contemplating. More than this, an understanding of Islám based on full recognition of 'the God-given mission of Muhammad' and free of sectarian bias, he felt to be an essential background for the study of the Bahá'í Faith. And so he 'produced a monumental work on Islám which will eclipse most of the books written on this subject' (Professor Zeine N. Zeine) — 'a subject which has never really received from western scholars and writers the objective and accurate treatment it deserves'. (The Hand of the Cause Abu'l-Qásim Faizi)

In the spring of 1979, when Hasan was striving to complete the first volume of his ambitious project, he said to a visitor, 'I hope that I will live long enough to finish it.' (O. Z. Whitehead) It had been a daunting under-
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taking during the previous four years as his materials accumulated and he laboured with utmost care to bring into being this great and unique work. No other comprehensive biography of Bahá'u'lláh, whether in English or Persian, has so far been achieved. The writer recalls the enthusiastic comment of the Hand of the Cause Paul Haney in April 1980, on reading the published Bahá'u'lláh, *The King of Glory*: It's 'great, really great ... There will never be anything like it.' To study the work of Hasan Balyúzí is to realize his central motivation: to promote the highest interests of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, and to do so with truth and dignity in a manner befitting its indescribably high station. That he did not complete all he had in mind is a loss for which we have no compensation. But, in the words of the Hand of the Cause Dr. Ugo Giachery, his 'gem-like books will remain among the most outstanding writings to enlighten the paths of seekers for centuries to come'.

A year after Hasan's passing, a brief but moving essay by him entitled *Khadíjih Bagum, the Wife of the Báb*, was published to commemorate this first anniversary, and in a foreword his son Robert described 'his legacy to the Bahá'í World', his own books and documents as the nucleus of the Afnán Library which, when established, should be open 'to all students and scholars wishing to research the history of the Faith'. It was 'his most dear wish: that his work should continue and that the study of the history of the Faith should grow to its recognition as a major scholastic discipline'. Already this hope has been recognized in the Hasan Balyúzí Lectureship founded in 1980 by the Canadian Association for Bahá'í Studies, for which distinguished Bahá'ís have addressed the Annual Conferences of the past four years.

During the last months of Hasan's life, following a time in hospital in October 1979 after a heart attack, he seemed to become the Hasan we remembered, frail but as one rejuvenated. He had already written the major part of the second

volume of his great project and was working on the third. On 4 November he had visited, after long absence, the grave of the beloved Guardian and a photograph at its gate records his happiness. On 26 November, having expressed a wish to do so, he spoke to Bahá'í friends at the Hazíratu'l-Quds on a theme close to his heart — 'The Power of the Covenant' — hoping 'to be with you more often, my great privilege'.(This beautiful talk is recorded on tape.) He had also conceived, with utmost longing, a plan to carry to the Threshold of the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh a leather-bound copy of his labour of love and praise for the One to Whom he had dedicated his life so long before. The first copy reached England early in February 1980, but instead of seeing it with his own eyes he had it delivered for this special binding. He was never to see it for on 12 February, as the result of a stroke in the morning hours, he passed away quietly in his sleep. It fell to his son Robert to complete this precious mission in March, which he performed in deep humility, and now the volume is preserved in the International Bahá'í Archives.

On 15 February in the chapel of the New Southgate Cemetery, and then beside his grave near that of his beloved Guardian, large numbers of his family and friends paid their final tribute. 'His life of service and spiritual obedience and sacrifices remains an effulgent example to emulate ... Dear, dear Hasan ... In time, all humanity will treasure your memory.'¹

There are certain pillars which have been established as the unshakeable supports of the Faith of God. The mightiest of these is learning and the use of the mind, the expansion of consciousness, and insight into the realities of the universe and the hidden mysteries of Almighty God. 'Abdu'l-Bahá

MARION HOFMAN

¹ This and the previous quotations by the Hand of the Cause Dr. Ugo Giachery from an Appreciation, 23 October 1983. The quotation which follows is from Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, no. 97.

RAHMATU'LLÁH MUHÁJIR
1923-1979

PROFOUNDLY LAMENTING UNTIMELY PASSING IN QUITO ECUADOR BELOVED HAND CAUSE
RAHMATULLAH MUHAJIR FOLLOWING HEART ATTACK COURSE HIS LATEST SOUTH AMERICAN

¹ This and the previous quotations by the Hand of the Cause Dr. Ugo Giachery from an Appreciation, 23 October 1983. The quotation which follows is from Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, no. 97.

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Picture at Upper Right Corner with the Caption: Rahmatu'lláh Muhájir

TOUR. UNSTINTED UNRESTRAINED OUTPOURING OF PHYSICAL SPIRITUAL ENERGIES BY ONE WHO OFFERED HIS ALL PATH SERVICE HAS NOW CEASED. POSTERITY WILL RECORD HIS DEVOTED SERVICES YOUTHFUL YEARS CRADLE FAITH HIS SUBSEQUENT UNIQUE EXPLOITS PIONEERING FIELD SOUTHEAST ASIA WHERE HE WON AQCCOLADE KNIGHT BHAULLAH HIS CEASELESS EFFORTS OVER TWO DECADES SINCE HIS APPOINTMENT HAND CAUSE STIMULATING

IN MANY LANDS EAST WEST PROCESS ENTRY BY TROOPS. FRIENDS ALL CONTINENTS WHO MOURN THIS TRAGIC LOSS NOW SUDDENLY DEPRIVED COLLABORATION ONE WHO ENDEARED HIMSELF TO THEM THROUGH HIS GENTLENESS HIS LUMINOUS PERSONALITY HIS EXEMPLARY UNFLAGGING ZEAL HIS CREATIVE ENTHUSIASTIC APPROACH TO FULFILLMENT ASSIGNED GOALS. URGE FRIENDS EVERYWHERE HOLD MEMORIAL GATHERINGS BEFITTING HIS HIGH STATION UNIQUE ACHIEVEMENTS. MAY HIS RADIANT SOUL ABHÁ KINGDOM REAP RICH HARVEST HIS DEDICATED SELFSACRIFICING SERVICES CAUSE GOD.

Universal House of Justice, 29 October 1979

Rahmatu'lláh Muhájir was born, in 1923, into a distinguished Bahá'í family. Three of his forebears — the Dawlatábádí brothers — attained the presence of Bahá'u'lláh and later were recipients of a Tablet from 'Abdu'l-Bahá bearing the salutation Ay Muhájirán — 'O Pioneers' — in which He exhorts them to thank God that they were able to meet the Blessed Beauty and prays for their success in rendering ever-increasing services to the Faith. The name Muhájir was adopted as their family name from that day.

The parents of Rahmatu'lláh Muhájir, Hafizu'lláh Khán and Ismat Khánum, continued the family tradition of dedication and service. Rahmat, his brothers and five sisters were brought up in a home that was a centre for many Bahá'í meetings and firesides attended by great Bahá'í teachers. Rahmat participated in all these meetings from early childhood and brought many seekers to hear the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh. If by chance there was no one to accompany him he would invite the corner shopkeepers, promising them a good Persian meal. He always remembered this period of his life as a very happy one during which he received a thorough Bahá'í training that had instilled in his heart the love of Bahá'u'lláh and devotion to His Faith. He chose the path of service early in his life and did not deviate from it. While in high school he was a member of the local and national youth committees and spent his summers visiting all the Bahá'í holy places in Írán.

His first experience of pioneering came following his graduation from high school when he postponed going to university and went to the province of Adhírbáyján for two years. His remarkable planning skills were apparent even at that early age. He organized youth and children's activities, taught adults in the evenings and prepared lessons and taught Bahá'í classes. He is still remembered in that area for his kindness, love, knowledge of the Faith, humility and sense of humour. This sense of humour persisted throughout his life and was a saving grace in many difficult situations.

After this period of pioneering he entered medical school. His friends recall that he sustained and even increased his Bahá'í activities. When well-meaning friends advised him to concentrate more on his studies to avoid

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failing, his reply was that Bahá'u'lláh would take care of his studies if he attended to His work. To the astonishment of all, a few months before graduation from medical school he suspended his studies and devoted three months to assisting in the accomplishment of the goals of the Forty-Five Month

Plan of the National Spiritual Assembly of Írán. He was secretary of the National Pioneering Committee and felt that it was not sufficient to do only administrative work. After the successful completion of the Plan he returned to his studies and graduated with honours from medical school.

We were married in 1951, just a few months prior to his graduation, and had the bounty of receiving a telegram from the beloved Guardian, sent to my father, the Hand of the Cause of God 'Alí-Akbar Furútan, conveying good wishes and saying 'praying blessings'.

In 1952 when the Ten Year World Crusade of the Guardian had been announced, it was our privilege to go on pilgrimage. Rahmat had the blessing on several occasions of being alone with the Guardian who spoke to him about the Pacific Islands, the Malaysian Peninsula and the great potential of that part of the world. Pilgrimage to the Holy Shrines and meeting the Guardian of the Cause of God increased the desire for sacrifice and service in Rahmat's heart. On his return he was impatient and disinterested in his well-salaried job as a physician in the American Point Four hospital in Isfahán. He wanted to leave everything, forget the material world and carry out the wishes of his beloved Guardian. The Guardian had asked the Bahá'ís to undertake the spiritual conquest of the world. Rahmat wanted to respond to this call immediately. He felt there was no time to lose. This attitude of absolute obedience to the Guardian and being guided by his words continued throughout his life; he devoured the writings of Shoghi Effendi and tried to follow and implement all the instructions. This was the motivating force of his life.

At the Asian Conference in New Delhi in October 1953 the National Spiritual Assembly of Australia and New Zealand announced that a physician was needed to fill their goal in the Mentawai Islands as doctors were the only ones who stood a remote chance of obtaining a visa. Rahmat volunteered without hesitation. He resigned from his job and we sold all our worldly belongings. He had no idea what sort of place Mentawai was, whether or not he could get a job and, most important of all, whether a permit to stay in Indonesia would be granted us. Rahmat was confident that by arising to carry out the behest of the Guardian all obstacles would be removed. In December 1953 we set out as pioneers to the Mentawai Islands. We arrived in the Island of Muara Siberut in February 1954 and were declared Knights of Bahá'u'lláh by the beloved Guardian. Rahmat was employed by the Indonesian Ministry of Health, given a permanent residence visa and — miraculously — was assigned to Mentawai Islands.

Pioneering to Mentawai Islands — four small dots on the map in southern Sumatra in the Indonesian Archipelago — opened a vast and exciting field of service to Rahmat. Although coming from a very different background and culture he felt very much at home in this new environment. He was joyful and constantly gave thanks to the beloved Guardian for this great opportunity and prayed to Bahá'u'lláh, day and night, not to take it away from him.

Muara Siberut is a former Dutch penal colony. Distant from the mainland, with no kind of development or comfort, and a constant climate of forty degrees

Celsius, it was not a priority in the minds of the government officials. The native inhabitants were left to themselves, had no medical care, and practically all suffered from malaria and severe tropical skin diseases. Rahmat, whose field of work was preventative medicine, began a systematic method of eradication of malaria and other diseases. He not only taught them the Faith but also helped them to better their physical life. He respected the people of Mentawai and did not try to change their customs or their manner of dress. He had come to bring them a spiritual message and their appearance made no difference to him. He loved the tattooed natives as though they were his nearest and dearest kin. He never interfered with any of their traditional practices, especially if they did not affect their health. He very often participated in the native healer's dances and ceremonies, and allowed them to apply ritual paint to his face before examining a patient. He taught them how to use soap when they bathed in the river,

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how to clean their hair, and how to take care of their babies. This genuine affection was reciprocated by the natives; they sought his advice and guidance in every matter.

As the number of Bahá'ís increased Rahmat helped them to move their villages to new sites and gave them plans which included a Bahá'í Centre and a Bahá'í Cemetery. Separate shelters were built for their livestock which up to that time had shared their dwellings. The natives supplied the wood and roof thatching and Rahmat gave them nails and assisted the many Bahá'í villages in the actual building of their houses. Perhaps the most important indication of the complete acceptance of Bahá'u'lláh by the natives of Mentawai was their willingness to depart from their ancestral burial ritual. It involved leaving the unburied corpse exposed until it decomposed and hanging the bare bones in their homes. After becoming Bahá'ís they buried their dead according to Bahá'í laws.

In all the years of his work in Mentawai, Rahmat had very cordial relations with the Christian missionaries. Although very often they opposed him and disrupted his work, he was always kind to them, attended to their needs when they were sick, showed them every courtesy and did nothing to undermine the faith of those they had converted to Christianity. The natives, whether Christian, Bahá'í or pagan, adored him. Once when the Governor of Sumatra visited the islands to inspect Rahmat's work many of the natives greeted him with shouts of Alláh-u-Abhá. When asked what this meant they referred to Rahmat saying, 'We are what the doctor is.' This resulted in a lengthy fireside with the Governor and other officials. The Governor was very impressed and for the duration of his term in office stayed on friendly terms with Rahmat.

Although Rahmat did not consider it so, all this was achieved with a great deal of physical hardship. Often when returning from his frequent trips to the remote interior, trips involving many days of walking through jungles and in waist-deep water, he would enter the wooden hut with tree bark walls that

served as our home, covered in mud and blood from the leeches that had attached themselves to him while he walked in the rivers, happy and elated because a few people in the village he had visited had accepted the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh. He dismissed the leeches and the blood, saying God was helping him not to have high blood pressure. We were both afflicted with the severest kind of tropical malaria a few weeks after our arrival in the islands. In Rahmat's case it was much more difficult as the shivers and very high fever came to him while he was walking in mud and torrential tropical rains and sleeping on a mat on the damp ground in the jungles.

The only means of communication with the outside world was a government mail-boat which visited Mentawai every six to eight months. When the mail included a message from the Guardian Rahmat's spirit soared and his soul became aflame. These letters and messages sustained him for the next eight months. Illness, lack of food and exhaustion did not matter, as long as the Guardian was pleased.

The numerous letters and cables addressed by Shoghi Effendi to Rahmat were left in Mentawai. The following extracts are quoted from the many letters of Dr. Hakím, the Persian secretary to the Guardian, which convey the Guardian's happiness with Rahmat's efforts in the Mentawai Islands.

18 July 1955: 'Assure Dr. Muhájir and his wife that he prays for them and the success of their services to the Faith. The outstanding services that he and his wife have rendered have brought much happiness to his heart.'

18 May 1956: 'He said to convey his profound appreciation to Dr. Muhájir, who is a true pioneer, and also to his wife . . . He is very happy with Dr. Muhájir and his wife.'

Rahmat was appointed to the rank of Hand of the Cause of God amongst the last contingent, in October 1957. The telegram of the beloved Guardian arrived when he was away in the villages of Java on a teaching trip. We had undertaken this rare trip to Djakarta on the instruction of the beloved Guardian to Rahmat to assist in the purchase of the National Hazíratu'l-Quds.

Rahmat's great desire had been to remain in his pioneering post for the rest of his life. The sudden passing of the beloved Guardian a few weeks after the appointment of the last contingent of the Hands of the Cause made

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this resolve even stronger. However, it was necessary for him to leave the islands. The affairs of the Faith were at a crucial point. The Ten Year Crusade was at its midway point and all the Hands of the Cause had to be involved in the world-wide development of the Faith. It was not possible for one of them to be incommunicado in a place that had no telegram or telephone service and was cut off from the rest of the world except by means of a boat which most of the time was out of service. It took months of persuasion by the Hands of the Cause in the Holy Land, and lengthy nights and days of prayer, before Rahmat, sadly and reluctantly, left the people he had loved so much and served so well.

We left Mentawai in 1958. In the four years of his work in the islands the number of Bahá'ís had increased to more than four thousand, three of the thirty-three Local Spiritual Assemblies had been incorporated, Bahá'í schools had been established, a Bahá'í endowment land had been purchased which was one of eight in the Bahá'í world, and a Bahá'í pamphlet had been translated and printed in the Mentawai language. This was a historic achievement as Mentawai was a spoken language that had never been recorded.

Rahmat always believed that entire villages should be brought to the Faith as this prevented disunity and friction amongst the people and allowed them to progress much more in following the principles of the Faith. He put this idea into practice in Mentawai. He worked for the village as a whole and directed all aspects of the villagers' lives according to the teachings. Many of the children who sat at his feet on the damp ground learning Bahá'í prayers and the alphabet by the light of a small candle and sometimes the glow of the moon went on to live at the Bahá'í dormitory in Sumatra which Rahmat had initiated and some became doctors and engineers. They remember him with love and affection and say they owe all to this gentle and kind man who sat them on his knees and chanted prayers and songs in his melodious voice.

A WHO Committee which visited Mentawai in 1960, in its report, after giving details of the beliefs of the Bahá'í Faith, devotes two long pages to Rahmat's medical work in the islands and adds that he was the only representative among those of different religions who was concerned with the development of the islands, establishing schools, eradicating disease and bringing cleanliness and order to the villages.

Leaving Mentawai closed a phase of distinguished service in Rahmat's life and opened a new one which continued for the next twenty years of his life. These twenty years are so entwined with the history of mass teaching and the development of the Faith, and his travels around the world are so extensive, that it is not possible to record all the events in the scope of this article. In the years between 1958 and 1979 he visited all the Bahá'í National Centres several times and in each country travelled to the interior visiting mass teaching areas and isolated believers. In the first three years of the Five Year Plan he had visited more than fifty countries. He travelled by sea and air, in buses and bullock carts, on foot and by hitchhiking. On one occasion he went from Afghanistan to Írán by oil tanker, and once, in order to visit a remote Pacific island, he signed on an oil tanker as a ship's doctor for two weeks. He told me later that he was seasick during that whole journey. He used utmost economy in all his travels, choosing the routes that would give him the most mileage on a plane ticket. He stayed at moderately priced hotels, in less expensive rooms, and chose meals that would not cost much. He very rarely went sight-seeing. To him, all cities and countries were the same. It was the quality of the teaching activities that made them different.

Rahmat's extraordinary quality of recognizing the needs of an area made his advice valuable and practical. His vast experience and continuous travels enabled him to participate and contribute many ideas towards the formulation of

the various plans of the World Centre. Co-operation between two neighbouring countries and the development of Bahá'í villages were ideas that were first introduced by him in Indonesia. He later implemented these ideas in the Philippines, Laos, Hong Kong, Korea, India and many countries of Africa and South America. He had the courage to advance suggestions and a talent for creating enthusiasm in those who would implement them. He had utter reliance on and submission to the will of God; hence

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he was never discouraged. He offered his proposals selflessly with love and humility and did not insist on their acceptance.

Each new plan was an exciting challenge. He never tired of discussing the goals with the friends. Many of us looked on the formation of a new Assembly as a routine task, whether it was a goal of the Nine Year Plan or the Seven Year Plan. Not Rahmat. Forming a new Assembly in 1979 was more exciting than the one formed in 1975.

His perception and deep interest in all areas of teaching, consolidation and proclamation of the Faith might be best illustrated by his work in the Philippines and India. Mass teaching in the Philippines started in 1960 when, accompanied by pioneers, he went to many villages and tribal areas. He cared for and nourished the new Bahá'ís of the Philippines with such love and understanding that it was as if the Philippines was the only country on his itinerary. He helped them with every aspect of their growth. He suggested books for translation into local languages, found the translators, selected a publisher, and even chose the paper and bargained for the price. He visited the new Bahá'ís and later the Local Assemblies over and over again, attended the first National Convention, spoke at universities and colleges, bought books on student exchange and presented them to the National Assembly. He later encouraged many Iranian Bahá'í students to enrol in the excellent universities in the Philippines. As the community grew in numbers and strength he called on the Bahá'ís to pioneer and took many of them with him and helped them to settle in Hong Kong, Laos, Malaya and many countries of Africa.

Rahmat had travelled to India many times, encouraging the friends to realize that the time had come for entry by troops in that vast subcontinent. His visit in 1961 was endowed with the blessing of the start of mass teaching.

A report by Mr. Hushmand Fatheazam published in the October 1961 issue of Bahá'í News of U.S.A. describes the arrival in Bombay of 'the revered Hand of the Cause Dr. Muhájir, whose encouragement and guidance had previously made the National Spiritual Assembly lay stress on the importance of teaching the masses'. Learning of his desire to hold a conference for the masses, word was sent to the Spiritual Assembly of Samagimanda and a conference was arranged there within forty-eight hours. In spite of severe cold the conference drew more than three hundred people and lasted until well past midnight. 'A group of Bahá'ís, organized by Dr. Muhájir, was . . . dispatched to various villages . . . So, from the beginning of February a process of chain reaction has set

in. Every few days a conference would be organized . . . The result of each conference would be between one hundred and two hundred declarations.'

Thus the process of entry by troops in India had started. In 1961 there 850 Bahá'ís and in 1963, 65,000.

Rahmat's proposals as reported in the November 1979 issue of Bahá'í News included acquisition of village Hazíratu'l-Quds, establishment of schools for education of children. Many Hazíratu'l-Quds were purchased and the village schools led to the establishment of the Rabbani school, the site of which was bought with Rahmat's help. He urged, from the earliest days, the establishment of an education fund. This fund is now in operation. On his return to India later in 1961 he foresaw the need for continuous deepening and began immediately to look for a suitable building to house a teaching institute. Eventually he found the building that was purchased and is now the Faizi Institute near Indore.

In 1967 he brought the first pioneers from Malaysia to India; the following years he began the flow of student pioneers from Írán. Also in 1967 he proposed the convening of a press seminar and conference for newspaper editors, helping to arrange it and prepare the materials and hand-outs, and attended the seminar which was very successful.

At the time of the first West Asia Youth Conference in 1971, he arrived a few days earlier and asked the youth to disperse to colleges and universities and proclaim and teach the Faith. In three days the number of new believers reached seven hundred.

He encouraged the Bahá'í Publishing Trust to publish Bahá'í books in all Indian and other languages and disseminate low-priced books to the other mass teaching areas. Under his constant guidance the Publishing Trust of India grew into a giant enterprise which sent thousands of books to the rest of the world.

He conceived the idea of a simple 'infor-

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mation folder', hundreds of thousands of copies of which are in use all over the world. The folder is still an important tool of proclamation. He proposed and helped prepare a Bahá'í correspondence course which was used very successfully in India, the Philippines and other mass teaching countries. He wrote a book on methods of Bahá'í education of children which is now being translated into English. These examples demonstrate that although remembered specifically for his devotion to mass teaching, he directed his energies towards all strata of society, and all the goals of various plans were of equal importance to him.

He appeared many times on television, gave radio broadcasts, had an audience with His Highness Malietoa Tanumafili II of Western Samoa, had interviews with many presidents, prime ministers, ministers and mayors in many of the countries that he visited. He gave talks in universities and at conferences in Europe and

the United States, as well as talks in small villages. In addition to representing the Universal House of Justice at the inaugural conventions of many national communities he participated in teaching conferences, Summer Schools and local events all over the Bahá'í world. To teach while sitting on the floor of a small hut in Korea in sub-zero temperature was of the same importance to him as standing at the podium of a well-known university in the United States. His belief was that humanity was athirst for the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh and that the Bahá'ís of the world had the capability of bringing millions to the Faith.

He very often chanted the Tablet of Visitation of 'Abdu'l-Bahá before going to any meeting and was convinced that the power of prayer would overcome all incapacities. Prayer was the core of his life. Very many nights he would spend in prayer till dawn for various projects in the Bahá'í world. He saw the Bahá'í world as one unit created by the Guardian through the Ten Year Crusade, and he believed that entry by troops should not be confined to the less developed countries of the globe. On numerous occasions he brought to the United States and Europe teaching materials used in India and South America, and urged the friends to use them. When they did, great results were achieved.

To give a glimpse of the effect on others of his services to the Faith I have selected the following passages from the countless letters and reports that make reference to him:

'He arranged the plans and bade us farewell. We are rich in the heritage of these visits . . . The fruits of his trips will continue to develop in the years to come.' Papua and New Guinea

'His mind was so keen, so alert, and he spoke quietly . . . his ideas were positive, progressive [so] that sometimes [they] pressed our imagination.' Guam

'The most striking aspect of Dr. Muhájir's personality seemed to be the rapidity with which he adapted his plans to a given situation and his humbleness when submitting these suggestions to the National Spiritual Assembly and then retiring.' Luxembourg

'Every time he met with our National Spiritual Assembly he had a different kind of theme. All revolved around teaching, but approaches were different. He had great humility and yet had the power to change individuals.' Japan

'He didn't ever seem angry when something was not possible. He had a strange acquiescence with obstacles.' Switzerland

'The insight and the depth of devotion which characterized his selfless example will continue to give impetus and commitment to the work . . . the vibrating influence of this champion teacher will reach beyond the imaginings of his admirers.' Gambia

'His devotion to the Cause, the encouragement he gave to so many Bahá'í communities, the seemingly endless energy he expended in carrying out his work and the uncounted other qualities he possessed combined themselves in a unique

and mighty warrior of Bahá'u'lláh.' U.S.A.

'It is difficult to attempt to convey the depth and magnitude of the services which Dr. Muhájir rendered in bringing into existence this fledgling pillar of the Universal House of Justice. When he first came to the Philippines we had four Local Spiritual Assemblies and a Bahá'í population of two hundred. Twenty years later, after two decades of showering his love and guidance upon us, there were forty-five Local Spiritual Assemblies and 64,000 believers.'

Philippines

'Dr. Muhájir is the only Hand of the Cause

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ever to visit the interior of the country. His love for the indigenous people initiated teaching which has resulted in over half of the believers in Paraguay.' Paraguay

'One of our goals was the acquisition of a National Hazíratu'l-Quds . . . we had found four houses for sale. Dr. Muhájir asked us to show him these houses. When we reached the third one, the present National Hazíratu'l-Quds, he immediately said, "This is it. I will pray that Bahá'u'lláh will assist you to acquire this property." He got out of the car and chanted prayers for some time. We did not even look at the fourth building. Of course Dr. Muhájir's prayers were answered.' Central African Republic

In all his life he never considered himself a worthy servant of Bahá'u'lláh. He prayed constantly and beseeched God's forgiveness and asked Him to assist him to overcome tests and tribulations. He sacrificed his all without thinking of it as a sacrifice. Whenever he had to leave our daughter, Gisu, who was born in 1961 in Germany while Rahmat was teaching in South America, he said it was as if a thorn went through his heart, yet he accepted the separation with submission and prayer. He never complained about the hardships of his travels. He sought service to the Faith with eagerness and embraced adversity in the path of God as a great reward.

This verse from a prayer by 'Abdu'l-Bahá which Rahmat chanted every day exemplifies his consuming desire to serve Bahá'u'lláh to the end of his days: Shelter under Thy protection, O Thou spirit of purity, Thou who art the All-Bountiful Provider, this enthralled, enkindled servant of Thine. Aid him in this world of being to remain steadfast and firm in Thy love and grant that this broken-winged bird may attain a refuge and shelter in Thy Divine Nest, that abideth upon the Celestial Tree.

His death came in the way he had always wanted, while serving the Faith, remote from home but amongst the Bahá'í friends. Despite extreme fatigue he had travelled to Quito, Ecuador, to participate in a special teaching conference arranged by the Continental Board of Counsellors in South America. On the second day of the conference he suffered a heart attack. Counsellor Ma'súd Khamsí, a close friend since the days of his youth who had shared many of the joys and hardships of his travels in South America, was with him until he came

to his final rest. Rahmat's last words were Yá Bahá'u'l-Abhá and he was holding clutched in his right hand a silk purse containing a few strands of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's precious hair which he had carried near his heart for more than twenty years.

Quito, that jewel-like white city, set high in the Andes, with its towering green mountains, breathtaking valleys and radiant indigenous population, was one of Rahmat's most loved cities. Ecuador, with its atmosphere pulsating with the power of the Words of Bahá'u'lláh, its masses responding in thousands to the call of the Faith of God, was an appropriate spot to embrace the earthly remains of one who had lived and died for the purpose of awakening the masses of humanity to the message of Bahá'u'lláh. His love and affection for the people of that land was deep and selfless. Bahá'ís of Ecuador felt this love and returned it in full measure by assisting him in his teaching work and continuing to carry out many of his suggested projects after his passing. Their mourning at losing this dear and trusted friend was genuine and their grief profound. When Gisu and I arrived in Quito for Rahmat's funeral, we found gathered around his casket many friends in their colourful native clothing, men and women, praying and keeping an all-night vigil according to their custom. They had taken him to their hearts and considered him one of their own.

Rahmat was a gentle, courageous, unassuming and kind man who served the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh with humility, self-sacrifice and absolute devotion. He was always ahead of his time, urging the friends toward a vision destined for them by the beloved Guardian. Those who knew him realized he could not stop; he was driven to fulfil his mission to the Faith until, like a meteor in flight, he burnt away his earthly frame on the southern horizon. He wore the spiritual mantle of a Hand of the Cause with dignity and humility and was a true example of the Words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá: The obligations of the Hands of the Cause of God are to diffuse the Divine Fragrances, to edify the souls of men, to promote learning, to improve the character of all men and to be, at all times and under

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all conditions, sanctified and detached from earthly things. They must manifest the fear of God by their conduct, their manners, their deeds and their words.

ÍRÁN MUHÁJIR

ABU'L-QÁSİM FAIZI

1906(?) - 1980

HEARTS FILLED WITH SORROW PASSING INDEFATIGUABLE SELF-SACRIFICING DEARLY LOVED HAND CAUSE GOD ABU'L-QASIM FAIZI. ENTIRE BAHAI WORLD MOURNS HIS LOSS. HIS EARLY OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENTS IN CRADLE FAITH THROUGH EDUCATION CHILDREN YOUTH STIMULATION FRIENDS PROMOTION TEACHING WORK PROMPTED BELOVED GUARDIAN DESCRIBE HIM AS LUMINOUS DISTINGUISHED ACTIVE YOUTH. HIS SUBSEQUENT PIONEERING WORK IN LANDS BORDERING IRAN WON HIM APPELLATION SPIRITUAL CONQUEROR THOSE LANDS. FOLLOWING HIS APPOINTMENT HAND CAUSE HE PLAYED INVALUABLE PART WORK HANDS HONOR LAND. TRAVELLED WIDELY PENNED HIS LITERARY WORKS CONTINUED HIS EXTENSIVE

INSPIRING CORRESPONDENCE WITH HIGH AND LOW YOUNG AND OLD UNTIL AFTER LONG ILLNESS HIS SOUL WAS RELEASED AND WINGED ITS FLIGHT ABHA KINGDOM. CALL ON FRIENDS EVERYWHERE HOLD BEFITTING MEMORIAL GATHERINGS HIS HONOUR, INCLUDING SPECIAL COMMEMORATIVE MEETINGS HIS NAME IN HOUSES WORSHIP ALL CONTINENTS. MAY HIS SHINING EXAMPLE CONSECRATION CONTINUE INSPIRE HIS ADMIRERS EVERY LAND. PRAYING HOLY SHRINES HIS NOBLE RADIANT SOUL MAY BE IMMERSSED IN OCEAN DIVINE MERCY CONTINUE ITS UNINTERRUPTED PROGRESS IN INFINITE WORLDS BEYOND.

Universal House of Justice, 20 November 1980

Picture in Upper Right Corner with the Caption: Abu'l-Qásim Faizi

As the news spread, thousands of Faizi's lovers wept in every part of the world. They had lost a selfless friend who had showered upon them the tokens of his boundless love through his visits to their homes in far-off corners of the earth, through the numerous little gifts he sent them, and through his wonderful, encouraging letters which uplifted their spirits, sustained them in times of sorrow, and enkindled in their hearts the longing to arise to greater heights in the service of the Cause of God. Among the hundreds of messages of grief which reached the World Centre of the Bahá'í Faith, there was one which expressed the feelings of all. It came from a fellow Hand who was closely associated with Faizi for many years, and it said, '. . . A special sweetness has gone out of the world and out of my heart...'

How can one write an adequate tribute to a man who, for over half a century, brought happiness and inspiration to all who crossed his path in life? How can one tell of the influence of his spirit on the countless children he held in his arms, the numberless young people whose talents he helped to develop, and the old men and women he visited with reverence and gratitude for what they had given to the world?

Faizi, as he wished to be called, did not like the celebration of birthdays, except those of the Manifestations of God, and did not know the exact date of his own birth which was

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probably in 1906. Of his early days in the city of Qum he always spoke with a touch of sadness, for he was surrounded by fanatical people. One of the few happy memories of his childhood was the local gymnasium — the zúr-kháníh — a traditional Persian establishment which is not only for the purpose of physical training, but also for inculcating human virtues such as chivalry, modesty and chastity in those who must bow in humility as they enter through its low door. Many fervent Muslims frowned upon the zúr-kháníh and Faizi had to sneak away from home in order to watch the pahlaváns perform their feats of wrestling and weight-lifting to the beat of the leader's drum. The leader of the zúr-kháníh, a man of dignity and great moral as well as physical stature, befriended Faizi and left a permanent mark on his character.

After a short period of rudimentary studies in Qum, Faizi moved with his parents to Tihrán. The atmosphere of his life completely changed, as though he

had come out of a stifling room into fresh air. His father, who was a Bahá'í at heart, allowed him to go to the Tarbíyat School — one of many schools started by Bahá'ís throughout Írán. Here he excelled in studies and in sports. Faizi often spoke with deep love and reverence about his devoted, self-sacrificing teachers in the Tarbíyat School, such as the great poet 'Azízu'lláh Misbáh and the learned Fádil-i-Shírází, who influenced him beyond measure and showed him the path of true servitude.

His fellow students, many of whom became life-long friends, loved and respected him. It was a joy to be present at Faizi's reunion with a fellow student years later. They still spoke with awe about those wonderful teachers they had had; they remembered their classmates with affection; and how they laughed over old jokes!

One Friday, not long after Faizi had joined the Tarbíyat School, his Bahá'í classmates took him to their 'character training class'. He always remembered that day and the kind, radiant teacher to whom he was immediately drawn — Núri'd-Dín Fath-i-Az'am. He began to attend these Friday classes regularly but did not at first realize their connection with the Bahá'í Faith. Although Faizi had never known Bahá'ís before coming to Tihrán, he was attracted to his Bahá'í classmates and his acceptance of the Faith was quite natural as though he had been a believer all his life. When his mother realized her son was a Bahá'í, far from showing antagonism towards the Faith, as the rest of her relatives did, she encouraged him to observe the rules which his new beliefs prescribed. A devout Muslim herself, she would rise at dawn during the Bahá'í month of fasting to prepare his breakfast and make sure that he woke up on time. She was later to know that her only other child, older than Faizi and already married, had also accepted the Faith in another part of Írán. This saintly lady became a firm Bahá'í many years later.

In those days the Tarbíyat School taught only up to the ninth standard. After completing the school Faizi spent some time at the American College in Tihrán before going on to Beirut, in Lebanon, for higher studies in 1927. Beirut was only four hours away by car from Haifa and Faizi came on pilgrimage shortly after he left Írán. The climax of his life was the moment he met the Guardian of the Cause of God at whose feet he laid his whole heart — instantly, completely and forever. From that moment to the end of his days, Faizi had but one desire — to serve the Guardian. He became selfless in this servitude and sought no name or distinction. His tender love for the Guardian was the cause of his happiness, and his solace in times of sorrow. This great love, the source of his own inspiration, overflowed to fill other souls and set them, too, on the path of service.

The Bahá'í students in Beirut were permitted to come on pilgrimage and visit the Guardian during their Christmas or Easter holidays. Faizi came whenever possible and stayed as long as he could. It was the Guardian who nurtured the seed of faith in his heart until it became a mighty tree and bore choice fruit for all to share.

During his visits to Haifa, Faizi was usually accompanied by his close friend and fellow student at the American University of Beirut — Hasan Balyúzí. Faizi, always humble and faithful towards his friends, said he owed a great debt of gratitude to Balyúzí, who guided him through those turbulent years and set an example for him to follow. The two were kindred souls and stood out as shining stars among the rest of the students from Írán.

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They had similar tastes, were both attracted to literature and the arts and sometimes worked together writing and producing plays for the Persian students' society in Beirut. They also took part in all Bahá'í activities, including a study class on the Faith organized by the students themselves.

The Guardian showered his favours on them when they came on pilgrimage and encouraged them in every way. Once he gave the two young men something to translate for him. At another time he sent them to visit the Mansion of Bahá'u'lláh in Bahjí when it was still occupied by the Covenant-breakers and no other Bahá'ís were permitted to go there. Faizi would recount the terrible state in which they found the rooms where Bahá'u'lláh had once lived. Having witnessed how the enemies of the Cause had ruined the beautiful Mansion, the friends were sent there again after the Guardian had renovated the building and furnished the rooms, restoring the dignity of the dwelling place of God's Manifestation on earth. Balyúzí and Faizi were the first Bahá'ís allowed to sleep in the Mansion after its restoration.

Another great honour was bestowed upon them and a few of their fellow students when they were invited to visit the daughter of Bahá'u'lláh, the Greatest Holy Leaf. Faizi has written about this unique privilege and the extraordinary effect that her celestial presence had on his sensitive soul.

Faizi had decided to go back to serve in the Tarbíyat School after finishing his studies in Beirut, and he was greatly encouraged by the Guardian's expressed hopes that Bahá'í youth consecrate their lives to the service of the Cause. The Guardian once asked him what he intended to do after his studies were completed, and expressed great satisfaction with his decision. At another time the Guardian enquired of him whether the Bahá'í schools in Írán were closed for the nine Holy Days. Faizi replied that he did not think they were, and the Guardian said they should not open on Bahá'í Holy Days even if this meant they would be permanently closed by the government. The words of the Guardian were significant, though Faizi did not realize their full import at that time.

On his last visit to the Holy Land the Guardian gave Faizi flowers from the Shrines to place on his behalf on the resting-place of the first American Bahá'í martyr, Mrs. Keith Ransom-Kehler, who had passed away in Isfahán.

The final parting with the Guardian, in 1933, would have been impossible for Faizi to bear had it not been for his great longing to start his work at the Tarbíyat School. Alas, he did not know that in 1934, less than three weeks

before he could finish his compulsory military service in Írán, all the Bahá'í schools in the country would be permanently closed by the government because the National Spiritual Assembly had decided not to open them on Bahá'í Holy Days.

His dream now shattered, Faizi reluctantly accepted a post with the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company in Tihrán. He had a good salary and prospects of climbing to the top of an important career. But his heart was not in riches and high positions. Though he was serving on Bahá'í committees and had started deepening classes for youth, he yearned to dedicate his whole life to the service of the Cause. He remembered that the Guardian had once told him not to defile himself with this world and wondered how he could escape it. But he remembered, too, that the Guardian had assured him of his prayers, and this was what he relied on.

An opportunity came his way and he seized it with joy and determination. The Bahá'ís of the village of Najafábád, whose schools had been closed by the government, had asked for a volunteer to go to live among them and teach their children. To the great surprise of all and the dismay of his friends, Faizi decided to give up his job and become a teacher in an obscure corner of the country. This was probably the greatest decision he was to make, for it set the course of his life away from the glitter of the world. When the Guardian read about it in a general report sent to him by the National Spiritual Assembly of Írán, he wrote in reply, 'This spontaneous decision will attract divine confirmations and is a clear proof of the high endeavour, the pure motive, and the self-sacrifice of that favoured servant of the divine Threshold. I am extremely pleased and grateful to him and I pray from the depths of my heart for the success of that active, radiant youth...'

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In Najafábád Faizi had about four hundred students, from kindergarten children to adults. He organized his classes in the homes of the Bahá'ís and went from house to house from morning till afternoon, sometimes starting at dawn to teach the youth who went to work in the fields after their lessons. Some of those who had previously taught in the two Bahá'í schools in the village helped him with the children, but Faizi had introduced Bahá'í lessons for all the students now that they were not obliged to follow the strict curriculum imposed on schools by the government, so the burden of the work fell on his shoulders. His mother gave him all her support. As his father had passed away while he was in Beirut, she had accompanied Faizi to Najafábád, and she helped him in every way she could. She loved the children who were always in and out of their modest home. She washed the faces of the little ones and combed their hair, and associated with their parents, serving them in many ways. She also supported Faizi financially in Najafábád with the little money left to her by her husband, for the nominal sum he himself received served only as pocket money, which he usually spent on the children. Their household at this time included a faithful old servant, a child Faizi had adopted before leaving Tihrán, and two other children belonging to a widowed relative. It was

in Najafábád that Faizi's mother dreamed of the blessed Báb and became a firm believer. It was also during this period that Faizi chose his life's partner, someone he had known for many years.

Faizi's daily work in the village did not end with the classes in the afternoons. In the evenings, dressed in simple clothes woven and stitched in Najafábád, he would attend Bahá'í meetings or visit the friends in their homes, inspiring them with stories from Bahá'í history or sharing with them some of the rare Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh which he had transcribed in beautiful calligraphy. He loved to sit at the feet of the older generation and hear from them about the first courageous Bahá'ís of Najafábád in the days of Bahá'u'lláh. The lives of the early believers always fascinated him. All his life he gathered these stories and recounted them to other Bahá'ís, touching their hearts and giving them insight into the sacrifices that had laid the foundations of their Faith. Often he would encourage a youth to serve the Cause by telling him of the great deeds of one of his own ancestors of which he himself had not known before.

During his stay in Najafábád, Faizi's work extended to the neighbouring city of Isfahán where he held a regular deepening class for a large number of youth, and to the surrounding villages where he visited the Bahá'ís from time to time. In Najafábád itself he helped to build a strong, well-organized community with a library, which was named after Zaynu'l-Muqarrabín, the famous religious dignitary of Najafábád who became a Bahá'í and went to live with Bahá'u'lláh in exile. Faizi also encouraged the Bahá'ís to build a public bath as none of the villagers had baths in their homes and Bahá'ís were not allowed to step inside the public bath owned by Muslims. But, of course, his main work centred on the children and the youth. Years later, as he travelled around the world, he was to meet dozens of them scattered as pioneers in different countries, many with high academic degrees and important positions, but still looking up to him as their teacher and their example in life.

Faizi stayed in Najafábád for about five years until he had trained enough teachers to carry on his work. During this time he had travelled to other parts of Írán, meeting Bahá'í communities and translating for visitors from abroad. He had also translated into Persian some of the Guardian's letters to the West, and prepared a condensation of *The Dawn-Breakers*. On these he based his notes when teaching Bahá'í administration and history at the newly-established Summer School on the outskirts of Tíhrán.

The National Spiritual Assembly asked Faizi to go from Najafábád to the town of Qazvín where there was another large community of believers. In reply to the Assembly's report, dated 1940, the Guardian wrote that they 'should constantly encourage this distinguished youth . . . so that all his time may be spent in important service to the Cause because his services are very important and his travels to Bahá'í Centres produce beneficial results. I do not forget the ceaseless services of that active servant of the Cause in Najafábád, and it is my cherished hope that he will be graciously aided to render greater

services, accomplish more important undertakings and achieve higher and more distinguished victories. This is my earnest desire for him at all times and under all conditions...'

In Qazvín, as in Najafábád, Faizi endeared himself to young and old alike. His personal life, as well as his dedicated work, influenced everyone who came in touch with him. He organized Bahá'í classes for all ages and took the youth on outings to visit believers in neighbouring towns and villages. He went to people's homes, taking warmth and laughter wherever he went. He encouraged the community to closer association and helped to establish a beautiful library in the name of one of Qazvín's foremost Bahá'ís — Hakím-i-Iláhí. But his greatest accomplishment in that town was the training of over thirty youth who studied with him every day, preparing themselves for dedicated service to the Cause. These youth became ignited torches and later carried the light of Bahá'u'lláh to different villages and towns, and many of them rendered outstanding services as pioneers in other countries. Faizi's stay in Qazvín was no more than a year but the results of his work there were immeasurable.

When the Guardian asked the Bahá'ís of Írán to pioneer to the neighbouring countries, Faizi's response was immediate. In the winter of 1941 he set out with his wife for Baghdád, hoping to obtain a visa to one of the countries in the Arabian Peninsula. He was unable to get to his pioneering post for a year, during which time he brought a new spirit to the Bahá'í community in Baghdád. He started regular study classes for their youth, encouraged the new believers, made friends among the members of old Bahá'í families from the days before Bahá'u'lláh's declaration, and continued to collect his precious stories. To those who, like himself, had set out to pioneer to Arabia and were stranded in Baghdád during the war — whole families with young children and elderly people living under dire conditions — he was a symbol of patience, a ray of joy with his ever-ready humour.

Faizi and his wife were among the very few who were able to pioneer to Arabia after the long waiting. They had, by now, exhausted what little money they had, but Faizi was offered a job in the only secondary school in Bahrain at that time. Unfortunately, the job was withdrawn after it became known that he was a Bahá'í, and it was only through a miracle that he was not deported from the island. There followed test after test, too numerous to recount, but nothing could dampen his spirit. His beloved Guardian had asked the pioneers to remain at their posts, and neither the terrible heat, the lack of water, of proper food and every means of comfort, nor the hostility of fanatical people could shake his determination to stay in Bahrain.

Faizi, his wife, the two children born to them in Bahrain and one new believer were the only Bahá'ís in that part of the world for about seven years before a few other pioneers could settle in the countries along the coast of Arabia. They were not permitted to mention the Faith and strange rumours were circulated about their beliefs. But Faizi, in his sweet, gentle manner, slowly

began to win the hearts of the inhabitants of Bahrain. His students at the school had been the first to be attracted to him, then the neighbours, the shopkeepers around and, finally, nearly all those who had considered him a heretic and had tried to have him deported became his friends.

Faizi had a way of bringing out the good hidden in people's souls. Once he befriended a well-known thief in Bahrain who spent most of his time in prison. Whenever he met this man on the street he would do some shopping and send the purchases home with him so that he could give him a little money for his trouble. The man faithfully delivered everything. One day Faizi entrusted him with some expensive items and, when he reached home after a long while, saw that the shopping had not yet been delivered. It might have been natural to assume that this time the temptation had proved too much for the thief, but no such doubt entered Faizi's mind. 'He has probably stopped for a chat in the market place,' he said. 'He'll come.' And he did.

Slowly surmounting many barriers, other pioneers — usually young men who could bear the hardships — began to settle in Arabia. They were scattered in different territories, lived under extremely difficult conditions, and could seldom receive news from their homeland. Faizi strengthened them through his wonderful letters, uplifting their spirits, en-

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couraging them to persevere at their posts and giving them what little news he himself received. He corresponded with their parents, assuring them that their sons were safe and rendering wonderful services to the Cause.

As the number of pioneers grew in Arabia, Faizi's correspondence increased. By this time he was also writing to other pioneers around the globe. He gave them news of the work in Arabia, sent them quotations from the Writings to inspire them, and anecdotes to make them laugh. To the end of his life Faizi corresponded with hundreds of friends, including many children. He loved to give people little gifts and he usually included in his letters quotations written in his own beautiful calligraphy and decorated by himself. These can now be seen framed in many homes in every corner of the world. Apart from his vast correspondence, Faizi wrote many articles and literary works and continued his translations.

The pioneers in Arabia adored Faizi. To them he was a father and a close friend. They looked up to him as their example, and from him they learned the lessons of true love and perseverance in the face of every worldly deprivation. Their only wish was to obey their beloved Guardian and cheer his heart. Even when, years later, Faizi had a good job and could afford to buy a few means of comfort for his home, such as a refrigerator, he refused to do so because other pioneers in Arabia could not afford such luxury. Everything he had was shared with others. When he was asked how he would be able to pay for his children's higher education, he said, 'There are so many children around me who need help now. How can I deprive them in order to save for an unknown future?' The children he assisted at that time are now grown up and serving their countrymen

through the different posts they occupy.

The Guardian referred to Faizi as 'the Spiritual Conqueror of Arabia' and wrote concerning his work, 'The unceasing meritorious services of that radiant youth in these past years illumine the annals of the Cause of God and set an example for all to follow...'

The sacrifices of the pioneers yielded rich fruit in Arabia. Although unable to teach their Faith, they won the friendship and respect of others by their lives, thus making it possible for many Bahá'ís to settle throughout the Peninsula. Before Faizi left, in 1957, there was already a National Spiritual Assembly in Arabia, and he lived to see five others established in that area.

Faizi had gone to India to attend the Intercontinental Conference in 1953, and had then accompanied a Hand of the Cause to Australia to translate for him. He was in Europe in 1957 when news reached him that he himself had been appointed a Hand of the Cause. Then, within only a few weeks, he was to receive the news which shattered his whole being. The Guardian had passed away. Grief-stricken and bowed with uncontrollable sorrow, he went to London to attend the funeral. Years before, the Guardian had praised his warm, resonant voice when he had chanted one of the Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh for him in Haifa. It was now his destiny to chant the Prayer for the Dead before the Guardian's remains were laid to rest.

Faizi had no desire to live after his beloved had left this world. The only thing which kept him alive was the task which the Guardian had entrusted to him. He drowned himself in work and did not stop until the last day of his life. Though broken in health and in and out of hospital for many years, nothing could even slow him down.

He was one of the nine Hands chosen to remain at the World Centre of the Faith, and he went through much personal suffering during those first five fateful years as he remembered the days when he had followed the Guardian through the gardens or heard him chanting in the Shrines.

In the Holy Land Faizi served as a link between his fellow Hands from the East and the West for he spoke and wrote both Persian and English fluently. He also knew Arabic and French very well, both of which were valuable to him in his work for the Cause.

Though the burden of work was heavy and his new tasks demanding, Faizi continued to reach out to his friends all over the world through his ever-increasing personal correspondence. Always a lover of people, he derived much happiness from meeting the groups of pilgrims and their children who came from different countries of the world. He showed them around the Holy Places, and prepared gifts for them to take away. Their

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response to his warmth was touching as they eagerly awaited his coming each day and sat spellbound when he spoke to them, answering their questions or telling

them some of his delightful stories. Many of these pilgrims, too, began to correspond with him after leaving the Holy Land.

It is impossible to recount here, even in brief, all the many valuable services Faizi rendered the Faith as a Hand of the Cause and as a member of the International Teaching Centre. He travelled extensively throughout the whole world, representing the Universal House of Justice at numerous conferences and Conventions; he defended the Cause against its Covenant-breakers, advised National Spiritual Assemblies, met heads of state and world dignitaries, gave public addresses and private talks, conducted study classes for Bahá'ís, visited the homes of pioneers in every continent, encouraged the youth to use their talents in the service of the Cause, inspired the hearts through his published writings¹ and translations, and never stopped sending out his valued letters even when he was too ill to receive visitors.

He had been confined to bed several times during his travels — once he had to be rushed to hospital in the middle of a talk — but he would not be persuaded to look after his health. He fell and rose again and again until his body could no more keep pace with his indefatigable soul. Though unable to travel, he continued to write letters and receive pilgrims in his home to the end of his life in 1980. Among the last papers he left on his desk were a few gifts he had prepared to give away — quotations from the Writings in his own calligraphy. At the bottom of each he had written, 'For the dear pilgrims.'

The Guardian, whose vision was not limited by time, had looked at this beautiful life in its entirety, and had written of Faizi in 1942: 'Blessed is he and those who like unto him aided the Cause of God by their words, their deeds, and all that was bestowed upon them by their Lord, and attained His good-pleasure.'

GLORIA FAIZI

AMAZ EVERETT GIBSON

1918-1982

To assist Me is to teach My Cause...

Bahá'u'lláh

The promulgation of the divine teachings revealed by Bahá'u'lláh was the driving purpose which animated, directed and sustained Amoz Gibson throughout his Bahá'í life. This objective perhaps reached the peak of its force between the years 1976 and 1978 when he became so enamored with the publications of the Universal House of Justice — Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh revealed after the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, Selections from the Writings of the Báb and Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá — that he would arise before dawn to read and reread this storehouse of the knowledge of God which seemed to give him so much strength.

Inspired by the Writings in 1976 he used his vacation period to travel-teach and stimulate the work of the friends in Holland, France, Italy, Mexico and the

United States — particularly in the southern states and on the Indian reservations.

In countless verses, he pointed out, the friends are exhorted to teach the Faith but in the verse quoted above Bahá'u'lláh gives teaching the station of assistance to Him. This single verse galvanized Amoz into planning, for the summer of 1978, a two-month journey (less than eight weeks during the last nineteen years of his life were spent purely as vacation) which carried him first to the cradle of the Faith — to Tíhrán, Shiráz, Isfahán, Najaf-Ábád, Ardistán, Tákur, Fort Tabarsí (viewed from outside), Sári, Tabríz, Ridá'iyyíh, the summer school and Temple land. In these revered spots Amoz was warmed by the outpouring of love by the friends and chastened and humbled by the miracle of seeing

1 Some of Faizi's best known works in Persian and English are: Payám-i-Dúst va Bahár-i-Sad-u-Bíst — 120 (1963-1964); Dástán-i-Dústán — 121 BE (1964-1965); The Priceless Pearl translated into Persian — 1969; Three Meditations on the Eve of November the Fourth — 1970; Explanation of the Emblem of the Greatest Name — 1970-1971; Our Precious Trusts — 1973; The Wonder Lamp — 1975; Stories from the Delight of Hearts translated into English — 1980

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Picture in Upper Left Corner with the Caption: Amoz Everett Gibson

with his own eyes these places he had read about and talked about and loved for so many years. Moreover, he was deeply moved to learn that the family who were our hosts in Tíhrán had never had the privilege of visiting the House of Bahá'u'lláh until they were permitted to accompany us. Amoz gave freely of himself and of his time; his advice, wisdom and wit won the hearts of the friends. How he lamented when he learned later of the destruction of the precious House of the Báb and the martyrdom of his two hosts in Tabríz, Mr. Yádu'lláh Ástání and Dr. Farámarz Samandarí.

Amoz continued his journey that summer to the United States where he visited Columbia, Maryland; Washington, D.C.; Albuquerque, New Mexico; Dinnebito, Arizona on the Navajo Indian Reservation; Daly City, San Francisco, Placerville and Auburn, California; Reno, Nevada; Wilmette and Chicago, Illinois; Cleveland, Ohio, and Amherst, Massachusetts. Taking his strength to the utmost he spoke at firesides, public meetings, meetings for Bahá'ís only, and had radio and television interviews as well as numerous private consultations. He urged the friends to concentrate their efforts, to select one person to pray for and to teach, to shower with love and gifts. He volunteered to take back to the Holy Land the names of these people and to pray for them in the Shrines. He pleaded for pioneers, named the countries where they were needed and entreated the friends to seize the bounty of assisting Bahá'u'lláh.

Amoz Everett Gibson was born on 3 August 1918 in Washington, D.C. to Deborah and William Gibson. His mother's grandfather was a full-blooded Creek Indian;

his father's mother was a mulatto slave and his father's father was Scotch-Irish.

William Gibson had trained for the ministry at Howard University in Washington, had become a Christian Science healer, and in 1912, still searching, was attending spiritualist meetings when he was directed to a Bahá'í gathering which was meeting in the same building. At his first Bahá'í meeting, some time following the visit of 'Abdu'l-Bahá to Washington, after hearing Mr. Harlan Ober¹ speak for only five minutes, Mr. Gibson realized his search had ended. He embraced the Faith immediately and returning home related the Message to his wife who, that same evening, unhesitatingly accepted Bahá'u'lláh as the return of Christ and the Manifestation of God for this Day.

Amoz attended children's classes and went often to Feasts with his father; but as there were few activities arranged at that time for youth he did not enroll in the Faith until 1944. Meanwhile, he had received his education in the Washington public schools and in 1940 was graduated from Miner Teachers College (now the University of the District of Columbia) with a B.Sc. degree in education with a major in social studies. In 1941 he married a schoolmate, Mary Elizabeth Lane. Amoz was a government employee at the Washington Navy Yard when he was inducted into the United States Army in 1944. He served with the armed forces in Europe and in the Pacific on Okinawa.

Returning to his home in 1946 he soon became an active participant in the Bahá'í community of Washington, D.C. At various times he served as treasurer and chairman of the Local Assembly, was on regional com-

¹ See 'In Memoriam', *The Bahá'í World*, vol. XIII, p. 866.

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mittees and was elected delegate to the national convention.

Using the benefits of the government educational program for veterans and rental income from his home as means of support while serving in the pioneer field, he travelled to Mexico with his wife and two children, William, seven years old, and Kenneth, two. Amoz fell in love with Mexico and its vibrant people and would have remained there permanently had he and his wife not made a commitment to return to their teaching posts in Washington for at least two more years. In 1951 he received his Master's Degree, summa cum laude, in geography from Mexico City College (now University of the Americas). Amoz continued his work in the educational field as a teacher at the Browne Junior High School where he had been appointed after his army service. One of his students there would one day become a pioneer in the Pacific and the son-in-law of a martyr of the Faith. Later Amoz was head teacher at the Blow School Annex to Browne; then he was a teacher of geography at Miner Teachers College.

His third son was born in 1952 and when Donald was three years old Amoz and his wife resigned from their jobs and pioneered with their three children to the Navajo Indian Reservation in Arizona and New Mexico. Having no employment, the family at first lived with Mr. James Stone, a pioneer to Gallup, New Mexico.

While making every effort to secure a position on the reservation through the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs, Amoz got a job washing cars. One day one of his customers, noticing him as a newcomer to the small town of 14,000 inhabitants, began a conversation with him. Learning of Amoz's situation he immediately arranged an interview for him with the director of the Gallup office of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Within a week, Amoz and his family (except for William who remained in Gallup with Mr. and Mrs. Stone so that he could attend school there) arrived at Piñon, Arizona, near the center of the Navajo Reservation and very close to the Hopi Reservation which it surrounds — an ideal spot for pioneers, 150 miles from town with two positions open because no one else wanted to fill them. Both Mr. and Mrs. Gibson taught there for four years.

The first months were spent making friends and adjusting to teaching older children who had never enrolled in school before and who spoke very little English. Soon, firesides were begun; then, at the close of the first school year, Mrs. Meherangiz Munsiff and her daughter, Jvoti, came to visit. The Indian people were greatly attracted to Mrs. Munsiff and in a very marvelous way she set the stage for the first Bahá'í study class which was carried on by the Gibsons weekly. In 1957 Sadye Joe, who attended that initial class, became the first of the Navajo tribe to accept the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh.

Sparked by the American Indian Service Committee, of which Amoz was a member, other pioneers settled on the Navajo-Hopi Reservations and in the towns bordering them. Though distances were great, the roads poor, and driving conditions always hazardous, there was a strong sense of unity and cooperation among the pioneers.

There were two outstanding events which Amoz worked very hard to support and bring to fruition. The first was the visit of Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánúm to the reservation in 1960. Her visit cemented relations among the Bahá'ís and stimulated new activities. Also, it aroused the interest of the citizens of that area, making them aware of the international character of the Faith and its worldwide importance.

Meanwhile, other Navajos had entered the Faith, notably Chester and Franklin Kahn and their wives, whose desire to share the Message with their families and friends led to the second event — the large weekend gathering of a thousand or more souls at Pine Springs, Arizona, in 1962. They came from far and near, Bahá'ís and non-Bahá'ís, and slept in clusters around campfires under a canopy of brilliant stars. The Hand of the Cause Dhikru'lláh Khádem, who with his dignified, loving spirit brought everyone closer to Bahá'u'lláh, provided the stimulus which resulted in the entry of a great number of new believers, more than 100 in just two days. Mr. Khádem said frequently during that weekend, 'O God, increase my astonishment in Thee!' What joy and astonishment this meeting brought to Amoz's heart. At last the work was moving forward.

In 1959 Amoz was appointed to the Auxiliary Board for protection; in 1960 he was

elected to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States. As a Board member he travelled extensively throughout the western states and also made a trip to Jamaica and Haiti. He served as a member of the National Teaching Committee for Africa and represented the National Assembly at the dedication of the Bahá'í Temple in Uganda in 1961, taking this opportunity to teach in the villages near Kampala and making firm and lasting friendships among the African believers.

Amoz moved from Piñon, Arizona, to teach English in the secondary school at Fort Wingate, New Mexico, and resided in Gallup about 14 miles distant. In 1960, after the birth of his daughter, Nancy, he was appointed principal of the Bread Springs Day School in New Mexico, and the family were living there when Amoz, attending the first International Convention in Haifa, in 1963, was elected to the Universal House of Justice. As a small boy, holding his father's hand as he walked along to Feasts, Amoz had heard him speak about the institution of the Universal House of Justice in such glowing, lofty terms that Amoz never expected it to come into existence during his own lifetime. However, once that institution did come into being he supported it with a deep, unswerving loyalty, with complete obedience and respect, with a feeling of humbleness and awe, and regarded all the other members as his true and loving brothers. It was apparent that they held that same regard for him as they tenderly bore his casket to its resting place.

Just prior to his election to the House of Justice, the entire family, encouraged by Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánúm was making arrangements to pioneer to Africa, so the process of breaking ties with the Navajo Reservation, which had become home, was already begun.

Arriving in Haifa in July 1963, Amoz took up his duties and responsibilities with the zest he was always enabled to summon when he found himself in a new and difficult situation. He was particularly pleased to be appointed convener of the Department of Holy Places as this gave him the opportunity to inspect every corner of these hallowed buildings and to assist in providing for their preservation, renovation and day-to-day care. He said he felt, when he stood on the ledge just outside the lantern as was necessary in the course of his duties, that he could stretch out his arms and almost embrace the Shrine of the Báb.

When a new roof had to be put on the Mansion at Bahjí, or new gardens laid out; when roads had to be built, or land purchased, or fences put up; when heavy wooden beams had to be secured from Turkey for the house of 'Abdu'lláh Páshá;¹ when additional office space had to be found at the temporary seat of the House of Justice on Haparsim Street; when the obelisk was to be erected on the Temple Land; when a completely new electrical system was to be installed in the Shrine of the Báb (completed in October, 1980); when the Permanent Seat of the Universal House of Justice was being planned and built, Amoz was always there, alert, spotting problems and avoiding or correcting them, pacing off

metres, measuring walls, writing letters to various companies, inspecting the marble cutting in Italy, visiting stone and gravel pits, signing contracts, restraining or complaining to or encouraging and praising the workers — and loving every minute of it. One of his true brothers remarked that he should have been an engineer.

Amoz became ill in San Francisco in August 1980, the evening before he was to fulfill his heart's desire to visit the Omaha Indian community of Macy, Nebraska, so dear to the Hand of the Cause Amelia Collins, and just after he had participated, in July, in the memorable Native Council of the indigenous believers of North America in Wilmette, Illinois.

Upon his return to Haifa his illness was diagnosed as acute lymphoblastic leukemia which usually attacks the young and is often curable in children. During his 'heroic struggle' against this disease Amoz lightened the hearts with his ready wit and open smile and won the admiration of doctors, nurses and patients whom he met at the clinic where he went periodically for treatment. He took their photographs and distributed them as gifts; he sent them flowers and generally showered them with love. He was able to enjoy about a year of complete remission.

When that period ended he decided to visit each one of his children whom he so dearly

1 See The Bahá'í World, vol. XVI, p. 103.

2 See The Bahá'í World, vol. XV, p. 177.

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loved and who, in turn, had given him so much devotion and appreciation throughout the years that often deprived them of his presence. This journey to Australia where Amoz had the bounty of his first visit to the Mother Temple of the Antipodes; to New Zealand to see Nancy and her husband, Jonathan; to Oakland, California, where Diane, Kenneth and Chehreh live; to Albuquerque, New Mexico, to visit Cheryl, Don, Lanya and Marla; and to Washington where he was joined by Bill who had braved snowy roads on his trip from Massachusetts and New York to see his father — this journey Amoz was able to accomplish by the grace of God, the loving consideration of Bahá'ís and non-Bahá'ís alike, and by his own strong will and determination.

When he was no longer able to fulfill his duties, to actively serve the Cause, to assist Bahá'u'lláh by teaching, it seemed he had little desire to remain on this plane of existence. Despite this, out of compassion for those around him, he compelled his spirit to shine brightly and gladly till the very end.

He passed away in Haifa on 14 May 1982, having had the bounty just three weeks before of praying in the three Holy Shrines, with his wife, four children, one of his daughters-in-law and two of his three grandchildren. As his daughter Nancy so lovingly expressed, he was a dearly-loved husband, father and grandfather whose whole life-work was devoted to the service and promulgation

of this blessed Cause, whose laughter and radiance were an inspiration to all and whom we love with all our hearts.

The Universal House of Justice, on 15 May, sent the following cable to the Bahá'ís of the world:

WITH SORROWFUL HEARTS LAMENT LOSS OUR DEARLY-LOVED BROTHER AMOZ GIBSON WHO PASSED AWAY AFTER PROLONGED HEROIC STRUGGLE FATAL ILLNESS. EXEMPLARY SELF-SACRIFICING PROMOTER FAITH ACHIEVED BRILLIANT UNBLEMISHED RECORD CONSTANT SERVICE FOUNDED ON ROCKLIKE STAUNCHNESS AND DEEP INSATIABLE LOVE FOR TEACHING WORK PARTICULARLY AMONG INDIAN AND BLACK MINORITIES WESTERN HEMISPHERE AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AFRICA. HIS NOTABLE WORK ADMINISTRATIVE FIELDS NORTH AMERICA CROWNED FINAL NINETEEN YEARS INCALCULABLE CONTRIBUTION DEVELOPMENT WORLD CELESTIAL WORLD EMBRACING FAITH. PRAYING SHRINES BOUNTIFUL REWARD HIS NOBLE SOUL THROUGHOUT PROGRESS ABHA KINGDOM. EXPRESS LOVING SYMPATHY VALIANT BELOVED WIFE PARTNER HIS SERVICES AND BEREAVED CHILDREN. ADVISE HOLD BEFITTING MEMORIAL GATHERINGS EVERYWHERE BAHAI WORLD AND COMMEMORATIVE SERVICES ALL MASHRIQUH ADHKARS
MARY GIBSON

BERNARD LEACH C.H., C.B.E.
1887-1979

My first breath of air was a cry of pain;

Will my last be a smile?

Bernard Leach

6 May 1979. He was sitting by the window in his hospital room talking with his daughter Eleanor, a friend and two nurses, about where they were born. It was Bernard's turn to contribute: 'I was born in Hong Kong' — [on 5 January 1887] — but the words wouldn't come. He put his hand to his chest, drew his last breath and was gone.

I have made death a messenger of joy . . .

How these much-quoted words of Bahá'u'lláh applied to Bernard Leach himself. He had done in his earthly life what he had to do and died happily in that knowledge. Now it is up to us to use what he has left.

Bernard Leach was the son of a colonial judge. His mother died when he was born and the first four years of his life were spent with grandparents in Japan.

As a potter, artist and writer he is internationally known. The importance of his work was his liaison between East and West — he connected artistically, culturally and spiritually. He wrote: 'As far back as 1913 it began to become apparent how that which we call fate lay behind my original intuition to return to the East where I was born. My own work as a potter and draughtsman was inextricably becoming rooted in two hemispheres and I began to find myself in the position of a courier between East and West. By one way or another I bore witness to a growing vision

Picture in Upper Left Corner with the Caption: Bernard Leach

of a future unity of mankind. Agnosticism of many years' standing gave way to an expanding faith in the maturity of man on this

planet . . . '1

It was in 1914 that he first heard about the Bahá'í Faith, from Agnes Alexander² in Japan. The seeds were sown. That same year in a privately published small book, *A Review*, he wrote: 'I have seen a vision of the marriage of East and West, and far off down the Halls of Time I heard the echo of a child-like Voice. How long, how long?...The books which remain to be written, first and foremost, and greatest, *The Bible of East and West* ...a love-union of the two hemispheres; a mystic ring on the finger of the world.'

From 1909 until 1920 he lived in Japan and the Far East, making many friends, and becoming known as not only a gifted artist-craftsman but for his spiritual perception of Japanese values. He went many times to Japan and, in 1966, for his cultural service to that country he received the highest honour to be conferred upon a British commoner by the Japanese government: The Order of the Sacred Treasure, second class.

It was Mark Tobey,³ with whom he made friends in the early thirties when at Dartington Hall in Devonshire, who deepened his interest in the Bahá'í Faith. Mark was resident art teacher; Bernard taught pottery, as well as keeping in touch with the St. Ives Pottery. Reg Turvey,⁴ Bernard's friend from the early years they spent together at the Slade School and the London College of Art, also came to Darlington to paint, bringing his family. He and his wife went to Bahá'í gatherings and accepted the Faith before Bernard did. It was after Mark returned to America and Bernard delved more deeply into the books he left him, that he became convinced.

As they had hoped to do, these three Bahá'í artists met again at the Bahá'í World Congress in 1963 in London. Reg, who had been referred to by the *Guardian* as 'the father of the Bahá'ís of South Africa', died in Durban in 1968.

Before Mark passed away in Basle, Switzerland, in April 1976, he was so happy to receive a cable from Bernard, MARK I AM WITH YOU IN SPIRIT NOW AND FOREVER. I remember hearing Bernard shouting, during the last stages of his earthly life, 'Reg, it won't be long!' Now the three are reunited.

When Bernard travelled to Japan after becoming a Bahá'í he fitted in Bahá'í talks with his work as a potter. He spoke fluent Japanese and became much loved by the people of that country. In 1953 his pamphlet *My Religious Faith* was printed both in English and Japanese, on Japanese paper, and reached many people. Prior to Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánúm's visit to Japan in 1978 he wrote introducing her to some of his acquaintances there, including Princess Chichibu, who afterwards wrote to Bernard to say how much she had enjoyed her visit. Towards the end of her nine-week travels around Japan, Rúhíyyih Khánúm wrote to Bernard: 'wherever anyone knows our contact with you, we are

received with special honours . . .'

When Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip travelled to Japan in 1975 they

1 From Drawings, Verse and Belief, Adams and Dart, Bath, Somerset. Now Jupiter Books (London) Ltd.

2 See 'In Memoriam', The Bahá'í World, vol. XV, p. 423.

3 See 'In Memoriam', The Bahá'í World, vol. XVII, p. 401.

4 Reginald Turvey, 'In Memoriam', The Bahá'í World, vol. XIV, p. 385.

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they took with them as gifts for the Emperor and Empress, a pilgrim plate made by Bernard and an etching he did in Japan in 1918. Previous to that, in 1973, in a private audience with the Queen at Buckingham Palace, he became the first craftsman ever to be made a Companion of Honour; he had been made a C.B.E.1 in 1962 and over the years received many professional awards. The recent book The Art of Bernard Leach² was a tribute by the Victoria and Albert Museum following his retrospective exhibition there in 1977. The editor, who was the exhibition organizer, ends his foreword by referring to Bernard as 'the greatest artist-potter-writer of this age'. A book review of Bernard's Beyond East and West³ goes further '...perhaps one of the greatest men of our time'.

But Bernard never wanted to be put on a pedestal; his humility was one of his most endearing qualities. 'When you're young it's difficult to get rid of the ego — -it wants to see the shine and the colour of butterfly wings,' he said in an interview.⁴ 'But as you get older you are gradually freed of pride.' The blindness which in the latter years of his life prevented his continuing his gifted work as a craftsman and artist he accepted as the will of God: 'Losing outer sight, I gained far greater inner vision.'

Bernard Leach's books, particularly Drawings, Verse and Belief and Beyond East and West, have been instrumental in attracting many people to the Bahá'í Faith. Press reviews of the latter in various countries, as well as articles — -even as far away as Australia — -have mentioned his Bahá'í belief.

Bernard welcomed visitors from all over the world and received letters of appreciation from them as well as from readers of his books, the last from a potter in the United States a few days before Bernard died, from which I quote: 'I wanted to write to tell you what a great deal you have taught me — -not only about pots but about life. I hope some day to be able to teach just one small thing to another, to show one person something new. With your guidance, perhaps I shall . . .'

On receiving the news of his passing, the Universal House of Justice cabled on 7 May 1979:

KINDLY EXTEND LOVING SYMPATHY RELATIVES FRIENDS PASSING DISTINGUISHED VETERAN UPHOLDER FAITH BAHUULLAH BERNARD LEACH. HONOURS CONFERRED UPON HIM RECOGNIT

HIS WORLDWIDE FAME CRAFTSMAN POTTER PROMOTER CONCORD EAST AND WEST ADD LUST
ANNALS BRITISH BAHAI HISTORY AND HIS EAGER WILLINGNESS USE HIS RENOWN FOR
SERVICE FAITH EARN ETERNAL GRATITUDE FELLOW BELIEVERS. ASSURE ARDENT PRAYERS
PROGRESS HIS SOUL.

TRUDI SCOTT

CLEMENTINA MEJÍA DE PAVÓN

1900-1979

SEGUNDO PAVÓN BARRERA

1894-1979

Clementina de Pavón preceded her husband Segundo Pavón into the Faith by a few months in 1960, and in 1979 she preceded him, again by a few months, into the Abhá Kingdom. They had spent nineteen years serving together the interests of the Cause, of their children and of the Bahá'í community of Ecuador, especially the indigenous believers of the Otavalo and Cachaco areas.

Both Mr. and Mrs. Pavón were the 'spiritual children' of their own son, Raúl Pavón, who became a Bahá'í during the Ten Year Crusade and is now a member of the Continental Board of Counsellors in the Americas. He purposely left the Bahá'í books lying about his parents' house hoping his mother would read them to 'see what he was mixed up in'. The result of her investigation was that Doña Clementina embraced the Cause in July of 1960. In December of the same year, her husband Segundo wrote a perceptive letter to the National Teaching Committee explaining that he had made a thorough investigation of the Faith, having studied The Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh and The Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh as well as the communications his wife had been receiving from Assemblies and

1 Commander (of the Order) of the British Empire.

2 Edited by Carol Hogben; Faber and Faber Ltd., Publishers.

3 Faber and Faber Ltd., Publishers. See The Bahá'í World, vol. XVI, p. 646.

4 Monterey Peninsula Herald, 7 January 1979.

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Two Pictures:

Caption of Picture in Upper Left Corner: Clementina Mejía de Pavón

Caption of Picture in Upper Right Corner: Segundo Pavón Barrera

committees. He related that through his study he had come to recognize Bahá'u'lláh, 'I have found the light with which the Lord our God has deemed to inspire his Divine Messengers to spread true faith in God, and being convinced of this reality, I desire to be accepted as a new believer in the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh.' The light he found at that time was to guide his life until the end of his time on earth.

The Pavóns were both born in Otavalo, a small Ecuadorian city in the Province

of Imbabura, the province that holds the largest concentration of indigenous Bahá'ís in that country. As this century opened, they were children growing up among the native people, learning Quechua, the lingua franca of the Andes, and learning also to appreciate the qualities and culture of a greatly underestimated and disparaged people. They acquired those humane qualities and that spiritual nature that distinguished their years as Bahá'ís and gave them the unique ability to identify with the Quechua-speakers they served.

They married in 1920 and had nine children, two of whom died young. They lived to see all their surviving children and a number of grandchildren accept the Faith. Their lives were, even before their exposure to the Faith, devoted to humanitarian objectives. Mr. Pavón was a civil servant, who well understood the needs of the Indians, and his wife, a loving mother to her own children, was also widely known as Mother Pavón, a beloved 'mater familias' for all who needed her.

Early in their marriage they purchased a farm in Cachaco, miles from any city, so that their children could be raised in a healthy and spiritual environment. It was in a jungle-like area with no transportation, not even roads. An undependable train which ran at irregular intervals at some distance from their home was the only means of travel in or out. They could not have foreseen at this time that the farm would become a school under Bahá'í auspices and a training institute for the native believers of Ecuador. Seeing the needs of the children of Cachaco, who were without educational facilities, they opened a school in their home, supporting it from the proceeds of their farm insofar as possible.

When the National Spiritual Assembly of Ecuador was formed in 1961, the Pavóns gave it their whole-hearted support, and began sending frequent detailed reports of their

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activities. In an early letter to the Assembly Doña Clementina wrote that she was teaching the principles of the Faith to the children of their school so that they would grow up to be true Bahá'ís. A few weeks later she sent notice that four of her pupils who ranged in age from six to sixteen years, had accepted the Faith. In August 1962 they shared with the National Assembly their happiness over the acclaim they received from the Ministry of Education for their efforts in educating campesino children. Unfortunately, a few months later Mrs. Pavón was greatly tested when she heard from the provincial director of education that she could not be considered a teacher as she had no degree in teaching. He wanted to send a young graduate with a degree to the area. Mr. Pavón wrote to say 'The truth is, the priest and his followers have offered to open a school in the area ...and take away our school'. In spite of the machinations against the school, their faith never wavered. Doña Clementina wrote asking for prayers for guidance, her words reflecting her undaunted spirit: 'I always have confidence in the help of Bahá'u'lláh and the prayers of our fellow-Bahá'ís' and that 'God is greater than every great

one'. The school continued, with daily classes for twenty children and literacy classes for adults in the evenings and on Sundays. Through their work enrolments in the Faith continued month after month. Reflecting on the lives of Segundo and Clementina Pavón from this vantage point in time, it appears that their independent effort to provide schooling to campesino children and literacy classes to adults, might well be regarded as one of the earliest of the 'tutorial schools' called for many years later in the Nine Year Plan.

When the National Spiritual Assembly needed a couple to work with the indigenous people in the areas of mass conversion, they knew that they had in the Pavóns two capable believers with an innate respect for the Indians, and who were well-versed in their language and culture. They were asked by the Assembly to move from Cachaco to serve as pioneers in Otavalo, their natal city. The Pavóns, in agreeing to the task assigned to them in Otavalo, were able to happily inform the National Assembly that the children of Cachaco would continue to receive education, for through Mr. Pavón's efforts a public school had been established and a road into the area had been opened.

In Otavalo the two worked tirelessly together on many projects. Señora Pavón was inspired to write songs, poetry and translations, while Señor Pavón spent many hours at the typewriter acting as her secretary, recording her work, meticulously and precisely, as was his nature.

The songs of Clementina Pavón, based on Bahá'í texts and set to the haunting Andean melodies she had heard from childhood, are played daily on 'Radio Bahá'í of Ecuador' and are sung in villages and international conferences around the world. One of them was sung by a choir in the Mother Temple of Latin America in Panama. They are songs that teach and instruct, that rejoice in the joy of being a Bahá'í, that bring the Manifestation close to the believer and that strike a responsive note in the hearts of children and adults alike.

'Radio Bahá'í' in its early years would have been musically impoverished without the contributions of Doña Clementina de Pavón. And her translations of the Writings into Quechua made possible the Quechua programming of the station.

In Otavalo, too, the Pavóns taught indigenous people to read and write. They helped to engender respect for the Quechua language, and to revive and restore its use among Quechua-speakers themselves, who were losing vocabulary from their language along with the self-respect of which they had been deprived by a Spanish-language culture. Mrs. Pavón helped to train the Quechua-speakers who were the first radio announcers to speak about the Faith in their mother tongue to their own people.

Their story would not be complete without the story of José Manuel. When they learned that a mother was in the market-place trying to sell her partially paralysed four-year-old child who was also mute, they immediately took the child, disregarding the fact that they had a houseful of their own children. They feared that someone would take him who would not give him love. José Manuel grew up with the Pavón children as one of their brothers. Through their

love and unwavering faith they were able to teach him many things, including the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, and the

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ability to utter a few words. José Manuel is now a man, a Bahá'í, devoted and ready to serve the Faith and the friends at all times. When their success with José Manuel was noted, they were offered another unwanted child who was totally deaf and mute. They accepted it and gave it the same loving care. Both are today loved and cared for by the Pavóns' children.

As the years passed and the health of the Pavóns began to fail, they moved, at the urging of their children, to a warmer climate at a lower altitude to live with a daughter. While they enjoyed being with their family, they soon felt restless at being far from the heart of Bahá'í activities, and in time returned to Otavalo and became engaged in the work of the Bahá'í Institute. Over the years they were mother and father to many pioneers who had the privilege of working with and learning from them. Pioneers and others relied on the herbal remedies Mother Pavón dispensed. Particularly in Cachaco, where there had been no doctors and no telephones, the sick would often turn to the Pavóns for help. Both served in countless ways on Assemblies and committees, national and local, as teachers, administrators and collaborators with conventions, institutes and every Bahá'í event of the busy years during which the Faith dramatically increased both its numbers and its activities in Ecuador.

Segundo Pavón's deep love for Bahá'u'lláh, his ardent desire to serve the Cause, and his complete devotion to his wife were all demonstrated at the time of her passing. While she was in hospital, Mr. Pavón, himself ill and quite fragile, was busy correcting her translation into Quechua of Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era in order to be sure that her last work would be complete and well-done. It seemed at that time that his sole desire was to complete this mission and join her.

Their staunch and unyielding faith in Bahá'u'lláh was the cohesive influence that welded this inseparable couple together in service to the Cause. They were richly rewarded in this life by seeing their son Raúl named to the Continental Board of Counsellors in the Americas, two daughters, Isabel Pavón de Calderón and Clemencia Pavón de Zuleta named to the Auxiliary Board, and all their other surviving children enrolled as devoted Bahá'ís. They are Rafael Pavón Mejía, Aida Pavón de Espín, Cecilia Pavón de Wilson and Teresa Pavón de Narvaez.

On the passing of Clementina Mejía de Pavón, on 17 May 1979, the Universal House of Justice cabled:

GREIVED PASSING BELOVED CLEMENTINA DE PAVON OUTSTANDING INSPIRING TEACHER FAITH WORTHY EMULATION ALL BELIEVERS. OFFERING LOVING PRAYERS DIVINE THRESHOLD PROGRESS HER SOUL.

Only two months later, following the passing of Segundo Pavón Barrera on 14

July, the House of Justice again cabled Ecuador:

PRAYING PROGRESS KINGDOMS GOD SOUL SEGUNDO PAVON. CONVEY FAMILY LOVING SYMPATHY.

And to Counsellor Pavón, on 15 July, it joined the International Teaching Centre in cabling:

HEARTFELT CONDOLENCES YOURSELF FAMILY. ASSURE PRAYERS SHRINES BOUNTIFUL REWARD. DEVOTED SERVANT FAITH SEGUNDO PARVON.

(Adapted from articles written by HELEN HORNBY)

HELEN EGGLESTON

1892-1979

Helen Latimer Whitney was born in Portland, Oregon, on 1 June 1892, the daughter of Kate Latimer Whitney and Edwin D. Whitney. Whitney, Marzieh Gail advises, was a prominent Lansing, Michigan, businessman, and owned one of America's most complete private gun collections, its oldest item being an Arab firearm, very light, for cavalry, dating back about three hundred years. His other avocation was making birdhouses.

Helen, The American Bahá'í of July 1979 reports, became a Bahá'í in Portland 'some seventy years ago after hearing of the Faith from a relative of hers, George Orr Latimer [who died in 1948]', and 'will be best remembered for her pioneering work in Bahá'í education through the establishment [with her husband, Lou (1872-1953)] of the Louhelen

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Picture in Upper Left Corner with the Caption: Helen Eggleston

School near Davison, Michigan', whose first session was held 'in August 1931 with the approval of Shoghi Effendi'.

Helen met Lou Eggleston¹ in the Bahá'í House of Worship in Wilmette, Illinois; they were married on 24 December 1930, Marzieh Gail in an unpublished reminiscence gives us a vivid picture of the couple set against the background of the creation and development of the school which was to bear their names: 'Helen was thirty-eight at the time of her marriage, slender and youthful in appearance, and she stayed that way throughout her life. Lou was fifty and had other family, Helen being his third wife. They produced two children of their own, first a daughter, Lou-helen, and later a son, "Buzzie." Although a recent Bahá'í at the time of their marriage, Lou then dedicated his life, as did Helen, to an enterprise which would be of value to the Faith. Searching the rural area near Davison, a few miles out of Flint they discovered a large property which had outbuildings and a deserted farm house. The house was fifty years old, built for the ages, with that confidence in the future, those self-respecting lines, that American architects can apparently no longer reproduce. It had oak timbers; the rest was of white pine lumber throughout. No plumbing, only a cistern under the kitchen and a pitcher and pump at the sink. Four porches, rotting away. It had last been painted forty years before. Lou, a

genius-level, self-taught engineer who had been obliged to leave school at eleven, went to work on the house and its 280 acres. On 1 August 1931 was held the first session ever of the first Bahá'í Summer School in the central part of the United States. (There were only two other Bahá'í schools in America at that time, Green Acre in Maine, and Geyserville in California.)

Names associated with that first nine-day session were Dorothy Baker, Louis Gregory, Harlan and Grace Ober, Howard and Mabel Ives, May Harvey Gift, Christine McKay, Fanny Knobloch and Mary Collison. Those in attendance met on the porch of a log cabin on Kersley Creek, which ran through the property, or sat on bleachers at the water's edge. The Guardian was very pleased with that first success and urged the friends to "do even more next season." The Egglestons toiled to plan the courses and expand the facilities . . . From the beginning, with continuous guidance from the Guardian and served by national committees, the school was youth-oriented. It stressed Bahá'í administration and also the study of Islám and the Qur'án, for on 2 December 1935 the Guardian wrote: "The knowledge of this Sacred Scripture is absolutely indispensable for every believer who wishes adequately and intelligently to read the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh."

In 1939, a handsome, official library was opened to the public, while Helen's private collection of Bahá'í books and rare pamphlets was becoming perhaps the best in the country. Her knowledge of the Faith was well organized, so that if you had a question, you would often turn to her for a documented reply.

In 1949, a nine-acre tract, including the main residence and all the other buildings and recreational grounds, was deeded by Helen and Lou to the National Spiritual Assembly. Meanwhile, with the help of a tenant farmer, varied activities were constantly going on: goats were raised; a special kind of flour was developed; additional dormitories were constructed; a tennis court, outdoor grill for wiener roasts and a craft center were provided;

1 See 'In Memoriam', The Bahá'í World, vol. XII, p. 712.

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a conservatory was established upstairs in the residence; and the Louhelen Bahá'í Choir was created by Esther Wilson of Bradley College.

Helen was known for developing new talent and many a teacher, crowded out by established talent elsewhere, got a start at Louhelen and found that he or she had abilities previously undiscovered. What Helen contributed throughout was to rule her domain with the proverbial rod of iron; but unlike most "dictators" she had a sense of the ridiculous. When you watched her carefully you noticed a barely perceptible tic, a small twitch to her lips. Whether the humor came first, or the tic, we do not know; but in any case they matched. Her custom when she first met a person was to test him out: she would stare at him out of round brown eyes, her mouth twitching just a bit, and make some outrageous statement, and watched to see how the individual responded. She once greeted a new arrival at the school with: "Your room is in such-and-such a building;

bed-time is ten o'clock; all the mail is read before we deliver it to you; good night!"

The operation of running Louhelen, Marzieh Gail continues, 'involved administering thousands of people, over the years, and it was Helen's continuous, invaluable, personal supervision, reinforced by Lou, that made Louhelen School the unique institution it was . . . Helen had small, delicate hands, and I doubt that she ever cooked anything or wielded a broom in her life, but she collected and closely supervised a fine staff. Not everyone was enthusiastic over the goat's milk and kelp which formed part of the Louhelen menu — and you were not allowed to escape to the city of Flint for a meal. Nor did Helen care for the individual's private ideas of what to eat. "The worst part is having to deal with all their special diets," she once confided. "You take today. Mrs. X has just informed me that she cannot possibly eat veal. So . . . — deadpan stare and slight twitch of the lips — "she's going to get some lovely chicken." I once asked her how, with all those buildings, she warded off a long succession of self-invited guests. "I explain that there's lots of work for them to do around the ranch," she said. "Lots of weeding, painting, driving the tractor, milking the goats . . ." To prevent cliques, she made each one sit by a different person at each meal. As for circumventing building romances, she said: "Takes about two weeks to get 'em started. Then we send 'em home and schedule a different study course."

'Basically egalitarian in spite of her Junior League background, she was as real as a sack of potatoes. She neither wanted nor accepted adulation for herself . . . Shy and vulnerable at heart, when confronted with formal guests she would have someone else present to manage the conversation. Nevertheless, even though it involved facing unfamiliar people, she was so anxious to have good relations between the school and the inhabitants of the area that she would go out of her way to make friends. One autumn she and Lou arranged for me to give talks on some forty platforms in surrounding towns — at schools, in churches, at men's service clubs, Rotary, Lions, the Kiwanis (the entire peas-and-chicken-à-la-king circuit) — they themselves driving me in the overheated car (Helen couldn't stand the cold) through the bare, wintry fields. Practical, the two would combine other errands along with getting to the lecture . . . It was Helen who arranged the lecture engagements . . . In those days religion was a taboo subject on most platforms of the kind I have mentioned; you walked on eggs, and the relevance of the Bahá'í Faith to the world situation was not understood. (Neither in fact was the world situation.) Lou was a member of Rotary himself, and as the years went by, the school gained in local prestige, and clubs in the area would often ask for Bahá'í speakers. One summer the Civitan Club of Flint used Bahá'í speakers for three successive meetings; the Zonta Club featured a staff speaker from Louhelen School, and the Flint radio station interviewed another. Winning this type of recognition was a considerable achievement for the time and place. Various groups would also make use of the public library on the grounds, and sometimes rent the school for conferences of their own . . .

'The home Helen shared with Lou and her children and thousands of Bahá'ís, and others, taught its own message and imparted its own memories that still linger in the mind. As for the budding romances nipped in the bud, we think there must be many a couple who still turn back, over the years, to their days in that lovely place.'

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Though best remembered for her association with Louhelen School, Helen served the Cause faithfully in various capacities throughout her lifetime and until her last breath maintained an active interest in its world-wide development and expansion. The gift of a copy of the new publication Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá sent to her by Lois Goebel elicited a happy response dated 17 April 1979, a month before her passing: 'O Lois! How can I thank you for this precious, priceless Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá! It arrived yesterday. The power of His Word shakes one, and is overwhelming, and I've only read a few pages! Thank you, my dear, so very, very much for your thoughtfulness and kindness. Do you know that section 167, page 198, is a Tablet that I had the blessing of receiving from the Master?'

The National Spiritual Assembly of the United States in its cable announcing the passing of Helen Eggleston on 9 May 1979 paid tribute to this 'stalwart, generous-hearted handmaiden Bahá'u'lláh whose name along with husband's will be associated with development Bahá'í education United States for generations to come'. From the Universal House of Justice on 11 May came this accolade:

GRIEVED PASSING VETERAN DEVOTED MAIDSERVANT CAUSE HELEN EGGLESTON WHO WITH LATE HUSBAND ESTABLISHED CENTRAL MICHIGAN SUMMER SCHOOL IN EARLY THIRTIES EARNING HIGH PRAISE BELOVED GUARDIAN. CONVEY FAMILY FRIENDS OUR CONDOLENCES ASSURANCE LOVING PRAYERS PROGRESS HER SOUL.

ELIZABETH KIDDER OBER

1902-1979

ALICE G. KIDDER

1902-1981

O ye handmaids of the merciful Lord! How many queens of this world laid down their heads on a pillow of dust and disappeared. No fruit was left of them, no trace, no sign, not even their names ... Not so the handmaids who ministered at the Threshold of God; these have shown forth like glittering stars in the skies of ancient glory, shedding their splendours across all the reaches of time.
'Abdu'l-Bahá

These words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá call to my mind the lives of dedication to the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh, and of service to the world of humanity, our dearly loved twins, Dr. Alice Gertrude Kidder and Dr. Elizabeth Meriel Kidder Ober.

Born on 22 September 1902, in Beverly, Massachusetts, to Arthur Harvey Kidder, pattern-maker, and Gertrude Maria Glines, schoolteacher, Alice and Elizabeth were raised, with their brother Harold, two years older than they, in a loving

and spacious rural home.

By the time they reached age eleven, the spirit of dedication to the service of mankind that was to characterize their lives was born. Their mother, active in the Congregational Church, often arranged visits from missionaries home on furlough from various countries. Many times Alice and Elizabeth, as children, were sent to the railroad station in their pony-cart to welcome and bring home those missionary speakers. Learning about mission life abroad decided the young girls that the only hope for the masses was education in physical hygiene and the acquisition of spiritual virtues.

Their father taught them to look always with a searching eye for the truth in every situation. These parental influences set the pattern of their lives. They pursued studies in osteopathic, homeopathic and naturopathic medicine. Elizabeth became an osteopathic physician first, graduating in 1927. Alice graduated a decade later and in the interval looked after their parents and carried on their father's flourishing greenhouse business.

When, in 1934, Elizabeth learned of the Bahá'í Faith from Lorna Tasker, a patient and later dear friend of hers, she knew in an instant that she would become a Bahá'í. At precisely the same time in another city, Alice first heard the name of Bahá'u'lláh. The twins hastened to share their momentous discovery, only to find the other already knew. Taught by other prominent Bahá'í teachers, including Helen Archambault, Alice's spiritual mother, and Grace Robarts Ober and her husband

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Two Pictures:

Caption of Picture in Upper Left Corner: Elizabeth Kidder Ober

Caption of Picture in Upper Right Corner: Alice G. Kidder

Harlan Ober, patients of Elizabeth's, the twins became Bahá'ís in Boston in 1939 and served the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh to the end of their earthly lives.

Harlan and Grace Ober had been married by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in 1912. Harlan was devastated by Grace's death in 1938 but learned to find comfort in an awareness of her continuing influence in his life. He never doubted that part of her legacy to him was yet another extremely happy marriage. On 21 June 1941 he married Dr. Elizabeth Kidder. A postscript in the handwriting of Shoghi Effendi appended to a letter written on his behalf on 20 June 1941 conveyed the Guardian's 'heartfelt congratulations' and the assurance of his 'best wishes'.

Grace Ober's dearly loved nephew, the Hand of the Cause John A. Robarts, gives a glimpse of his great affection and esteem for the twins:

'My Aunt Grace's death was a shock. We all loved her very much, but three years later Harlan married Elizabeth Kidder, and as she had a twin sister, Alice, this meant that while I had lost one aunt, I acquired two new almost-aunts. They were delightful people, devoted Bahá'ís, skilled osteopaths, and with

Harlan were Bahá'í pioneers in Southern Africa near where my wife, Audrey, and I lived with two of our children, Patrick and Nina. They kept us all in good health. In describing their dedication to serving others, Harlan said, "They are like two fire-horses; come back to the firehall after standing for hours at a fire, exhausted, but ready to dash out to another fire without a murmur of complaint."

Anyone who knew Elizabeth and Alice will recall with awe and amusement their extraordinary relationship as identical twins. As children they delighted in confusing their teachers and classmates; as doctors in practice together, they could substitute for each other when necessary, some patients never knowing the difference. They had telepathic communication: while one wrote a letter, the recipient was already sending the answer before having received the question. Whenever one was ill, the other came immediately to the rescue with medical expertise and that loving spirit of service for which they were both famous. They shared an uncanny ability to perceive and rise to the needs of others — physical, emotional or spiritual needs — and in the

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process, those who opened themselves to their care discovered such qualities as Alice's self-effacing efficiency, her resourcefulness, tenderness and wisdom; or Elizabeth's sense of humour and determination to explore alternatives, overcoming seemingly insurmountable obstacles.

Elizabeth and Harlan were elected to the Spiritual Assembly of Beverly in 1942. They held regular firesides, travel-taught, gave public talks. For a time Elizabeth served on the Regional Teaching Committee. Alice was elected to the Spiritual Assembly of Greenwich. All three were, at different times, delegates to national conventions and speakers at Louhelen Bahá'í School; Elizabeth and Harlan also at Green Acre.

In May 1953 at the Mother Temple of the West, Alice responded at once to the launching of the beloved Guardian's Ten Year Crusade by offering to pioneer to the Union of South Africa. In March 1954, after correspondence had been delayed in the committee, Shoghi Effendi advised her to go immediately. Within two days she was on her way. Elizabeth and Harlan deputized her. During her pilgrimage, en route to South Africa, Shoghi Effendi directed her to Pretoria, the capital city, where she arrived in April 1954. It was during this pilgrimage that she first drew close to Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum, Shoghi Effendi's wife, through treating her and spending some time in her company — a bond which was later to develop and mean so much in both their lives.

Alice's life, alone in her pioneer post, was an example of complete faith and courage as she quietly went about finding and furnishing a downtown office, and building up a medical practice among the white population in accordance with the prevailing racial restrictions of the land. With discretion she used the office also as a place of contact for teaching and held classes there each week. Dedicating every day to the service of Bahá'u'lláh, she remained steadfast through many difficulties.

Her joy knew no bounds when, in March 1956, she was joined by Elizabeth and Harlan who also made their pilgrimage to the Holy Land before reaching South Africa. Alice and the first Tswana Bahá'í woman, Dorothy Senna, had laid a foundation, in Lady Selbourne, for the formation of the first all-African Local Spiritual Assembly in the Pretoria area and in April 1956, following the expressed wish of the Guardian, the Obers brought the institution into being. Aided by Alice they also raised up a Spiritual Assembly in Atteridgeville in 1958.

The twin doctors were greatly loved by their patients. Their practice grew.

Functioning as a team with Harlan in their Bahá'í work they taught at every opportunity and conducted study classes twice weekly. Harlan's stories of 'Abdu'l-Bahá welded together the hearts of pioneers and local believers and difficulties often melted into joy and laughter. Alice, Elizabeth and Harlan will long be lovingly remembered for their vital service of deepening the knowledge of the friends in the Pretoria area, many of whom are today serving the Faith with exemplary capacity and devotion.

The pinnacle of Alice's life was the six years she served Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánúm as physician and companion from 1958 to 1964. Amatu'l-Bahá's own words, cabled at the time of Alice's passing, best describe this achievement:

...DOCTOR ALICE KIDDER OUTSTANDING OLD BELIEVER CONSECRATED DEVOTED PIONEER BOTH SOUTH AFRICA MEXICO. . . PRECIOUS LINK MY OWN LIFE AGONIZING PERIOD FOLLOWING PASSING BELOVED GUARDIAN WHEN FOR SIX YEARS SHE LIVED WITH ME CARED FOR ME SERVED AT WORLD CENTRE FAITH WITH UNIQUE SELFLESS DEVOTION ...

During Alice's six-year absence, Elizabeth maintained the medical practice alone, and she and Harlan continued their Bahá'í work, including teaching trips to Mozambique, Swaziland, Zululand, Basutoland and Rhodesia. They served on the National Teaching Committee of South and West Africa for some years. On 20 July 1962 Harlan died. Urged to do so by Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánúm, Alice returned to South Africa in 1964. Ever since Harlan's death Rúhíyyih Khánúm had felt it was not right to separate the twins and that Elizabeth needed her more than she did. The sisters remained another five years in South Africa, continuing their practice together.

Elizabeth went to the United States in 1967

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and spent four dusty months carefully sorting through and distributing to the International, American and Canadian Bahá'í archives an enormous collection of historical and other papers dating back to 1905 which had belonged to Harlan, and to Grace and Ella Robarts. While there, Elizabeth traversed the country from coast to coast and gave twenty-five well-received Bahá'í talks.

In 1969 Alice and Elizabeth made their farewell teaching trip to Cape Town, an unforgettable feast of love among their Bahá'í friends of all races.

Returning to the United States, they settled in St. Petersburg, Florida. They longed to pioneer again, but were plagued by incredible mishaps. Both sisters were constitutionally prone to breaking their bones. Each suffered a severe hip fracture. Alice never really walked again. With heroic determination and fortitude, still imbued with their passionate desire to pioneer and not merely to rust out and die in their homeland, Elizabeth arranged their final move, this time to their pioneer post in Guadalajara, Mexico, where they arrived, Elizabeth in May 1975, Alice the following month. At Ridván 1978 they were elected to the Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Zapopan, Elizabeth serving as chairman.

Despite difficulties arising from not speaking Spanish, Elizabeth participated in brief teaching trips in Jalisco and Nayarit, and she and Alice both made valiant efforts to deepen the friends, their home a centre of Bahá'í activity, frequent firesides, their Bahá'í library available to all who came to study there.

The twins were taken to hospital following a car accident in November 1978 and shortly thereafter it became evident that they could not return to their home. After a lifetime of serving others, they were now surrounded by what seemed to be a band of angels who attended to their every need. Foremost among these were the Sala family, Emeric, Rosemary, Ida and Paul, who, respectively and collectively, looked after their financial affairs, their correspondence and voluminous historical papers, the disposal of their possessions, their daily needs; and Jack Jacobs, a gifted Bahá'í medical student whose visits each day brought laughter and assurance of the best medical attention, and somehow, sometimes, a favourite treat: chocolate ice cream. All who were privileged to be near the sisters in their final months were touched by their detachment from worldly things, their courage, steadfastness and humour in the face of overwhelming difficulties and suffering.

In March 1981, when she was in Mexico during a tour of Central America, Rúhíyyih Khánúm made a special trip to Guadalajara to see Alice in her nursing home and stayed long enough to visit her on three different occasions. This brought great joy to both of them, Alice brightening up to very much her old self and, with child-like pleasure, eating the ice cream brought as a gift.

Elizabeth left this world on 1 June 1979, and Alice followed her on 26 November 1981. The following excerpts from cables sent by the Universal House of Justice and by Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánúm upon the passing of Elizabeth and of Alice point to some of their sterling qualities and unforgettable services to the Cause of God:

From the Universal House of Justice on 5 June 1979:

GRIEVED PASSING ELIZABETH OBER HER SERVICE PIONEER FIELDS WARMLY REMEMBERED ...

From Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánúm:

...HEROIC PIONEER ELIZABETH OBER SHE ALICE SHINING EXAMPLES FUTURE GENERATIONS COMPLETE DEDICATION CAUSE GOD.

And from the Universal House of Justice on 29 November 1981:

RADIANT HANDMAID BAHAUULLAH ALICE KIDDER. HER SACRIFICIAL EFFORTS FOREIGN PIONEERING FIELDS HER DEVOTED LABOURS WORLD CENTRE ABOVE ALL HER PERSONAL SERVICES AMATULBAHA DURING POIGNANT PERIOD AFTER BELOVED GUARDIANS PASSING LOVINGLY TENDERLY REMEMBERED ...

The twins' remains are buried together in the Cemeterio Municipal de Guadalajara, and their radiant souls are surely soaring upwards together through all the worlds of God.

NINA GRACE ROBARTS TINNION

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Picture Upper Left Corner with the Caption: Jean Hutchinson-Smith

JEAN HUTCHINSON-SMITH

1886-1979

Jean Hutchinson-Smith was the Australian-born daughter of John and Margaret Lauder who, with a young family, left Scotland about 1880 to seek a new life in a new land, and settled in Sydney, Australia. Jean was born in 1886 and was educated at Sydney Girls' High School — at that time, 1900, the only girls' high school in the State of New South Wales — and at the University of Sydney. She passed to the Abhá Kingdom on 20 July 1979, in her ninety-third year.

Jean was fifty-five when she found the Bahá'í Faith and had been widowed for eight years, but her daughter, Alicia, feels that if they had both heard of the Faith at an earlier time her father would undoubtedly have embraced it, for breadth of thought was always apparent in the family.

Jean's life as a young, educated matron was filled with the difficulties caused by living for many years in backward country towns where her classically-educated husband was posted as a teacher. Some of her receptivity to the spiritual life must have been born of the combined effects of education and harsh living conditions. She had a truly international outlook and was a sincere seeker after Truth. Her introduction to the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh through Stanley and Marietta Bolton, and subsequently 'Father and Mother Dunn', was the climax of this long search. She became a Bahá'í in March 1941. A letter from the beloved Guardian dated 22 January 1944 was her most cherished possession. In his own hand he had written: 'May the Beloved bless your devoted efforts, guide every step you take in His service, remove all obstacles from your path and fulfil every desire you cherish for the furtherance of the interests of His Faith.'

After she became a Bahá'í she travelled extensively in the British Isles and Europe from 1948 until the early 1960s, neglecting no opportunity to meet with the friends in the many countries she visited. Her gift for languages, particularly German and French, was a tremendous advantage. She was an able speaker and will long be remembered gratefully in Edinburgh where significant

newspaper publicity on the Faith followed a public meeting she addressed in that city. The Bahá'ís there had been trying for years to break into the press. Marion Hofman recalled this when she visited Jean in Sydney in 1977, so many years after the event, which must have taken place in 1948, the same year in which Jean and Alicia served as tellers when the first Local Spiritual Assembly of Dublin was formed in the home of George Townshend. Wherever Jean's ship called she made contact with the believers. In 1959 she and Alicia visited Tokyo, the first Australian Bahá'ís to visit the Japanese Bahá'í community. On two visits to Europe and the United Kingdom in the early 1960s Jean was tireless in promoting the Faith in company with Alicia. 'I wish to assure you of my loving and deep-felt appreciation of your constant and manifold services to our beloved Faith,' the Guardian wrote in a postscript to a letter written on his behalf on 18 February 1950. 'I will supplicate the Beloved to bless continually your high endeavours, to remove every obstacle from your path, and enable you to win great victories for its institutions.'

The erection of the Bahá'í Temple at

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Ingleside was the great thrill of Jean's Bahá'í life. She had seen the Faith grow in numbers and strength to a degree that in the early days of rented meeting halls would have seemed a dream. She rejoiced in hearing prayers recited in her home in languages other than English, as testimony to the universality and growth of the Cause. During Marion Hofman's visit in 1977 Jean remarked how deeply she regretted not having had the privilege of making the pilgrimage to the World Centre due to the dates being fully booked when she applied, and was comforted by Marion's reply, referring to words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, in which He expressed the thought that to be engaged in teaching the Cause is equivalent to having attained the Threshold (Tablet to Mariam Haney dated 18 October 1903).

(Reprinted from Australian Bahá'í Bulletin, July 1980, and based on information supplied by ALICIA HUTCHINSON-SMITH.)

FU'ÁD AHMADPÚR

(FU'ÁD AHMADPÚR MILÁNÍ)

1922-1979

Fu'ád Ahmadpúr Milání (known as Fu'ád Ahmadpour) was born in 1922 in Tabríz, Írán. He was the eldest son of 'Ináyat'u'lláh Ahmadpúr Milání. The family, which was devoted, steadfast, deeply-rooted in the Bahá'í Cause and of distinguished lineage, moved to Tihrán while Fu'ád was still in his childhood.

Fu'ád's paternal grandfather, Hájí Ahmad Milání, was one of the early believers who recognized the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh. Following the martyrdom of the Báb, His remains were taken to Milán and kept for a time in the silk mill of Hájí Ahmad.¹ Fu'ád's maternal grandfather, Ibráhím Adhar Munír, was an outstanding Bahá'í teacher who, for a while, served 'Abdu'l-Bahá as a

scribe.

Picture in Upper Right Corner with the Caption: Fu'ád Ahmadrúr

From childhood Fu'ád Ahmadrúr manifested courage, pioneering while still a youth to the remote town of Mahallát where he bravely proclaimed the Faith publicly from inside a mosque. As he left the building he was attacked by fanatics who beat him with sticks and chains until he fell wounded and unconscious and was believed to be dead. He was taken to a hospital in Tihrán where his recovery was effected, though traces of his injuries remained on his face throughout his life. He studied at Tihrán University and completed his education in Paris and Geneva, receiving a Ph.D. in Law. He made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land and would often repeat what the Guardian said to him about his having followed in his father's footsteps in serving the Faith.

Fu'ád Ahmadrúr's service to the Cause was characterized by fearless courage. He pioneered to Morocco in 1955, setting an example of sacrifice and self-denial. He opened his home to the friends and tirelessly travelled to visit the believers in every corner of the country. Not satisfied with ordinary feats or small achievements, he always sought perfection and excellence. He was determined to win important goals in the administrative

1 See Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 54.

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affairs of the Faith. His fame grew: Bahá'ís and non-Bahá'ís, the élite and layman alike, would go to him for solutions to their problems. He dealt with ease with people from all walks of life both within and without the Bahá'í community. The services of the friends aroused his deep admiration: a poor Bahá'í giving a contribution or an illiterate friend teaching the Faith successfully would inspire him. Nothing was capable of frightening him for he knew that all was worthless compared with the Cause, and in light of its greatness he did not consider himself or his services of any significance.

He served on the National Spiritual Assembly for almost twenty years and as an officer for many of these and, with his vast personal ability, carried the great responsibility of serving as liaison between the National Spiritual Assembly and those who wished to contact it from inside or outside. He arranged the meetings and carried out the decisions. In the incident of al-Nádúr, when several Bahá'ís were imprisoned, he did everything in his power to exonerate them.

The name of Fu'ád Ahmadrúr, whose services are an integral part of the achievements in Morocco, will be recorded in letters of light in the history of the Faith in that region. It is sufficient here to quote a passage from a letter written by Counsellor Muhammad Kbdani to commemorate the passing of Mr. Ahmadrúr:

'To my dear servant-friend, the lion of God, Mr. Fu'ád Ahmadrúr: God's decree is that he be unexpectedly hidden from the eyes of the Bahá'í friends in

Morocco, the friends who loved him wholeheartedly. He ascended to the Kingdom of God following a heart attack suffered on 2 August 1979 in London, and was buried close to the grave of his beloved Guardian whom he would frequently mention with tearful eyes.'

The following cablegram was received from the Universal House of Justice praising his glorious services:

DEEPLY GRIEVED UNTIMELY PASSING FUAD AHMADPOUR HIS DEVOTED PIONEER SERVICES EXTENDING OVER PERIOD SEVERAL DECADES HIS SPIRIT DEDICATION COURAGE IN PROMOTING VITAL INTERESTS FAITH WILL ALWAYS BE REMEMBERED. ASSURE MEMBERS BEREAVED FAMILY LOVING PRAYERS HOLY SHRINES PROGRESS HIS SOUL ABHA KINGDOM.

SAMI DOKTOROGLU

1901-1979

GRIEVED LOSS OUTSTANDING SERVANT BHAULLAH SAMI DOKTOROGLU WHOSE UNINTERRUPTED DEVOTED SERVICES OVER SEVERAL DECADES SHED LUSTRE ANNALS FAITH TURKEY WON HIM ADMIRATION CONFIDENCE BELOVED GUARDIAN AND GRATITUDE ALL BELIEVERS. HIS WORTH ACHIEVEMENTS ACQUISITION HOLY PLACES TURKEY HIS LEADERSHIP INFANT COMMUNITY TIME NEED HIS SERVICES INSTITUTIONS FAITH IN MANIFOLD FIELDS WILL BE ALWAYS REMEMBERED. WE EXTEND SYMPATHY RELATIVES FRIENDS DEPARTED CO-WORKER AND ASS FERVENT PRAYERS PROGRESS SOUL. ADVISE HOLD MEMORIAL GATHERINGS.

Universal House of Justice

Salih-bey, the grandfather of Sami Doktoroglu, was a distinguished and well-respected medical doctor who was employed at the palace of the Ottoman Sultán in Istanbul. He was known for his kindness and help to the poor. His wife was related to the family of the Sultán. The family belonged to the Turkish Dervish order Bektáshiyya Taríqat (Bektáshí Taríqat). Their son, Halit-bey, an army officer, was sent to Birecik where he met and married Emine Khánum, a native of the town. In 1901 Sami was born to them. His parents moved back to Istanbul where he attended Robert College — a missionary school — and from his many Greek schoolmates acquired a mastery of their language. His education was interrupted at the outbreak of World War I. Not old enough to serve in the army, Sami was employed by the government as a translator, remaining in Istanbul until the end of the war. When civil unrest swept the country in 1920, the family moved back to Birecik where Sami again found work as a translator in a government office.

The Bahá'ís of Birecik were attracted to Sami's upright character and sought his assistance in providing translations of Bahá'í newsletters and articles written in English which had been sent to them by friends abroad.

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Thus, Sami-bey was introduced to the Faith which he frequently discussed with 'Abdu'l- Qadir Diríöz and eventually accepted.

In 1930 he married Behiye Khánum, the daughter of a well-known Bahá'í family of Ghazi Antab. Five children were born of the union: Süheyla, Süreyya, Erol

Badí', Halde and Semura. The couple settled in Mardin for two years and then moved to Diyarbakir, engaging in commerce in both places. While they were in Mardin the Bahá'í friends in Urfa, Adana and Ghazi Antab were arrested and put on trial; some were imprisoned and their books were destroyed or confiscated. Sami-bey was also called to the police station but after being detained overnight and interrogated he was set free. In 1938 he returned to Istanbul. Although the Local Spiritual Assembly could not meet because the Faith was under proscription, the friends used to meet among themselves and share news of Bahá'í activities around the world. In Istanbul he started a travel agency and in a short time was loved and admired for his trustworthiness, honesty and good character.

Sami-bey was the sole heir to the Bektáshiyya endowment, as well as other properties belonging to his grandparents, but he refused them all. He loved the Bahá'í Faith and had nothing to do with the administration of the Taríqat, though he would have gained a considerable income.

After the second World War he was invited to be the general representative of Pan American Airways which was extending its service for the first time to Turkey. Soon other airline companies were offering him an agency. His was the first and only firm to be given such an offer. In Turkish history books he is mentioned as the founder of travel agencies in Turkey. He was hard-working and determined. Through his business he became well known to the authorities and the general population.

Picture in Upper Right Corner with the Caption: Sami Doktoroglu

The visit to Istanbul in the winter of 1951 of Mrs. Amelia E. Collins (appointed a Hand of the Cause on 24 December of that year) at the request of Shoghi Effendi marked the turning point in Sami's Bahá'í life. He had been requested to make the necessary arrangements. He made hotel reservations and greeted her at the airport with a large group of friends. Mrs. Collins's visit infused new life into the community. Several meetings were arranged at which she could meet the friends and a large banquet was given in her honour. She conveyed messages from the beloved Guardian and extended his love. While she was in Istanbul Sami received a cablegram from Shoghi Effendi inviting him to visit the Holy Land. Thrilled and astonished, he proceeded to Haifa, and returned filled with renewed spirit and enthusiasm, his devotion to the Faith reinforced by his having been in the presence of the Guardian for whom he had great admiration and love. After his return a letter dated 14 December 1951 written on behalf of the Guardian reached the believers in Istanbul encouraging the friends to establish a Local Spiritual Assembly and to pursue other tasks concerning which he had given instructions to Sami.

In April 1952 the first Local Spiritual Assembly of Istanbul was formed with Sami as one of its members. He began to deepen his knowledge by reading Bahá'í books in English, many of these as yet not available in Turkish, and making a special study of Shoghi Effendi's

God Passes By. Under the guidance of the Guardian with whom he was in frequent correspondence he implemented the delicate negotiations for the identification and purchase of the Holy Places in Istanbul and Edirne associated with the presence of Bahá'u'lláh. At a later time, writing of his pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 1951, he said of Shoghi Effendi, 'I never imagined his bestowing upon me so many bounties, even one of which would be sufficient to make me happy throughout eternity. I am still unable to realize the blessings bestowed upon me, none of which I have deserved.'

Many pioneers arose in 1952, settling in all parts of the world, in answer to the call of the Guardian. Sami was of great assistance to the Persian friends, many of whom knew of his travel agency, and he tendered practical help in their relocation. In 1953 he took delight in attending the International Conferences held in Stockholm, Kampala and New Delhi, and was present at the dedication of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár in Wilmette. At these gatherings he met many believers from all parts of the world and experienced a fuller appreciation of the reality of membership in the Bahá'í world community. Later he was privileged to attend the World Congress in London and to participate in the first International Convention for the election of the Universal House of Justice.

He served as a member of the Auxiliary Board and was the trustee of the Huqúqu'lláh in Turkey. In 1957, not long before the passing of Shoghi Effendi, he conducted the long search which resulted in the acquisition of the site for the future Mashriqu'l-Adhkár. When the friends in Ankara were jailed in 1960 and questioned about their beliefs, and had their books taken from them, Sami contacted high-ranking government officials and addressed a letter to the President of Turkey explaining that the Bahá'í Faith is an independent religion and not a sect of Islám. The friends defended themselves admirably in court and were released. He was the author of *Dnya Medeniyetinin dogusu* (Dawning of a World Civilization), and of an introductory pamphlet entitled *The Bahá'í Religion*, and he compiled and translated a book called *Beklenen Cag*. His works were popular among the friends. He sent copies of his works to the then Prime Minister, Mr. Nihat Erim, from whom he received a warm letter of acknowledgement, as well as to other high-ranking officials. He was successful in obtaining permission to search the government archives for various documents related to the Ministry of Bahá'u'lláh. Among his findings was an indication, hitherto unknown, that Mulla 'Alf-y-i-Bastámí, one of the Letters of the Living, the first martyr of the Bábí Dispensation, who was put to death in 'Iráq, had in his travels reached the city of Bolu, east of Istanbul.

In 1977, despite his age and the condition of his health, he accepted an invitation from the National Spiritual Assembly of Australia to spend two months teaching in that country. In 1978 he visited Cyprus twice as a travelling teacher.

The death of his dearly loved sister, Hayriye Khánúm, who had married his Bahá'í teacher, 'Abdu'l-Qadir Diröz, affected him deeply, as she was the only member of his family who accepted the Faith. Indeed, the others considered him an infidel. Although not an educated woman she had immersed herself in the

teachings, gained a great knowledge of the Faith and was an excellent and valued teacher of the Cause.

The Universal House of Justice had requested Sami to make inquiries about the possibility of shipping lumber from Turkey for the restoration of Holy Places in 'Akká. The last letter from the House of Justice reached him late in July of 1979. On 31 July, while giving instructions to his daughter, Süheyla, to accomplish the instructions of the Supreme Body, he partially lost consciousness. Three days later he was taken to the hospital and on 4 August he passed to the Abhá Kingdom.

A letter of consolation addressed to the family in October 1979 by the beloved Hand of the Cause Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum brought the sweet solace of these words: 'Our beloved Guardian esteemed your father very highly and I am sure his reward in the Abhá Kingdom is very great. He will be much missed by the believers in Turkey and indeed in many countries where the friends were a witness to his many services to the Faith.'

(Adapted from a memoir by SÜREYYA GULER)

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Picture in Upper Left Corner with the Caption: Mosese Hokafonu

MOSESE HOKAFONU

1927-1979

GRIEVED LEARN PASSING DEVOTED SERVANT BAHULLAH MOSESE HOKAFONU HIS SERVICES
FAITH OUTSTANDING ASSURE FAMILY FRIENDS ARDENT PRAYERS HOLY SHRINES PROGRESS
HIS SOUL ABHA KINGDOM

Universal House of Justice

It was in the early years of the Ten Year Crusade that Mosese Hokafonu, who lived on the island of Tongatapu in the Kingdom of Tonga, first heard of the Bahá'í Faith. He became deeply attracted, readily embraced it, and for the remainder of his life was one of its staunch supporters and outstanding teachers. The flame of love that was ignited in his heart never dimmed. He brought knowledge of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh to many hundreds of people on tiny atolls and larger land masses scattered throughout the Pacific.

For many years Mosese served on the Local Spiritual Assembly of Nuku'alofa and he travelled the length and breadth of Tonga in search of waiting souls. He donated for the site of the national Hazíratu'l-Quds half of the small piece of land he owned in the centre of Nuku'alofa and lived with his family on the other portion. His home was always open to the local Bahá'í friends and to the many visitors from overseas: all found a warm welcome there.

In July 1968, when he was appointed to the Auxiliary Board, he wrote to the Continental Board of Counsellors: 'I am very happy indeed to accept your call and I am praying that the Blessed Beauty will lead me and guide me to teach His Cause in this field and to win many victories for our glorious Faith.' Mosese joined Gina and Russ Garcia on board their vessel Dawnbreaker for an extensive

teaching trip which took them through the islands of Fiji, Tonga and Samoa. They visited a number of outer islands and called at many villages. Mosese was the first Pacific Islander to undertake teaching trips of long duration. His wife and children saw him but rarely as he journeyed, under the guidance of the Counsellors and various National Spiritual Assemblies, to Kiribati and Tuvalu; Niue; the Solomon Islands; New Guinea; the Marshall, Mariana and Caroline Islands; Nauru; Australia and New Zealand, to name but some of his destinations. His gentle and enthusiastic soul always attracted listeners, and to many a lonely and isolated believer he brought love and a renewed spirit. In New Zealand he spearheaded teaching among the Maoris, walking countless miles to meet them, staying on their maraes, and often working with them on their farms. He visited, as well, Hawaii, Alaska and the continental United States.

Mosese's luminous spirit, happy personality and enthusiastic manner of teaching endeared him to friends and strangers alike. He had a ready smile and a deep and natural sense of hospitality. He was always positive in his approach, respecting the views of others and encouraging and supporting them. To him the Faith was sublime and when the demands on his time became too great he resigned his

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government job to devote the rest of his life to serving the Cause. He moved with his family from their home in town to a small house in a village where they lived a simple life. He developed a strong band of assistants who aided him in his Auxiliary Board work.

Many of his co-workers learned of his last illness only when they arrived in Tonga for a meeting of the Auxiliary Board attended by members from Tonga, Fiji and Samoa, all the arrangements for which Mosese had undertaken in spite of ill health. At the end of the meeting he was admitted to hospital. His affliction had taken its toll and he passed to the Abhá Kingdom on 28 August 1979. Baron Vaea, a well-known Tongan noble, a relative who greatly respected and admired Mosese, conducted the funeral service which was attended by many hundreds of people. Mosese is survived by his equally devoted wife, Ofa, and five children. The feats achieved by this devoted servant of Bahá'u'lláh in the Pacific region bring to mind the words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá: O that I could travel, even though on foot and in the utmost poverty, to these regions, and, raising the call of 'Yá Bahá'u'l-Abhá' in cities, villages, mountains, deserts and oceans, promote the Divine teachings! This, alas, I cannot do. How intensely I deplore it! Please God, ye may achieve it.1

SUHAYL A. 'ALÁ'Í

MELBA M. CALL KING
1910-1979

A casual observer might assume mistakenly that Melba King lived in a limited and narrow world of darkness, for she was blind. But those who were privileged to share her world know that she lived in beauty and light, her horizons

uncircumscribed by physical limitations.

A Yupik Eskimo, she was born on 11 October 1910 in the village of Savanaska in the Bristol Bay region of Alaska. Orphaned at an early age and physically handicapped, she might have been lost had it not been for Dr. French, a United States Commissioner, who took an interest in her welfare and assisted with planning for her physical and educational needs. She was reared by a white, foster-mother, Corrine Call, a teacher for the Alaskan Indian Service.

Melba earned her way through college, attended the School for the Blind at Vancouver, Washington, and studied at Perkins Institute in Massachusetts. Later she completed two years' study at Washington University and an additional two years' study at Central Washington University. She was the first blind student ever to graduate from that University. Her diploma was presented to her by the Governor of the State of Washington, the Hon. William Langley.

Determined to help others to broaden their perspective through education, Melba accepted a position teaching newly-blind adults in New Mexico. It was there that she met Kathryn Franklin² who introduced her to the Bahá'í Faith, an event that was to change the course of her life. Melba declared her belief in Bahá'u'lláh on 23 May 1943 in Albuquerque, New Mexico — the first full-blooded Eskimo to do so.³ This occasion, unforgettable for Melba and significant for the Faith, was made more memorable by a letter written on the Guardian's behalf by his secretary on 24 July in which he predicted a radiant future for Melba and for her people. In his own hand Shoghi Effendi wrote, 'Your most welcome letter has rejoiced my heart. I extend to you a most hearty welcome into the ranks of the followers of Bahá'u'lláh, and will greatly value your support and co-operation. Your conversion to His Cause is indeed an historic event, and will greatly rejoice the hearts of the believers. I will pray for your success and spiritual advancement from the depths of my heart. Rest assured and be confident.'

To teach the Faith among the Eskimos became her greatest hope.

She returned to Seattle, Washington, in May 1944 and attended the Washington State Training Center for the Blind where she met Eugene King. They were married on 30 September 1944.

Humility was an integral part of Melba's personality. She was a determined and completely honest champion of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, never hesitating to speak out

1 Tablets of the Divine Plan, p. 39.

2 See 'In Memoriam', The Bahá'í World, vol. XIV, p. 337.

3 Bahá'í News, November 1943, pp. 5-6.

numerous Local Spiritual Assemblies she was to become adept in the art of consultation. Unafraid of controversy, she believed that all the facts were necessary to full and frank consultation, and encouraged everyone to express his opinion as openly as she did. Outstanding among her gifts was that of love which she extended to Bahá'ís and non-Bahá'ís alike. She was an accomplished pianist and often performed at public meetings. She was, as well, a skilled secretary, and a competent speaker and teacher. Her teaching trips were numerous and varied. She, Eugene and her gentle guide-dog became a familiar sight throughout Alaska, Oregon, California and Washington. She taught on Indian Reservations and at Bahá'í summer schools from Geyserville, California to Juneau, Alaska. She served on the committee that launched the first mass teaching effort in Washington which reached nearly three thousand people, and made repeated visits to teach the Yakima and Tulalip Indians on their reservations. Melba and Eugene were the first public speakers in an Indian community at Neah Bay, Washington. In addition to her dedicated and varied services as a member of the Local Spiritual Assemblies of Tacoma and Seattle she served on the National Bahá'í Committee for the Blind.

Throughout her many years of service in the Bahá'í communities of Washington, part of Melba's heart yearned for her native Alaska. In 1969 she and Eugene moved to Juneau and soon endeared themselves to the entire Alaskan Bahá'í community. Despite difficult weather conditions and precarious health they served on the Local Spiritual Assembly of Juneau and its numerous committees, did extensive teaching throughout the country, and helped build and strengthen the Juneau community before moving to Anchorage in 1971, a move which became necessary because of the need for access to medical facilities. Melba also served on the National Teaching and National Goals Committees. In 1972 ill health forced the Kings to relocate in the milder climate of Washington. They were able to attend the 1976 International Conference in Anchorage, following which they made a teaching trip into the central and northern regions of Alaska. In July 1978 they made a teaching trip to Sitka and formulated plans to settle again in Alaska, this time in Haines. But it was not to be. On 7 September 1979, after a year of puzzling illness, Melba was called to her greater home in the Abhá Kingdom, leaving us very blessed for having shared her world of infinite vision. She was buried in Mount Pleasant Cemetery, Seattle. On 10 September the Universal House of Justice cabled:

PASSING MELBA KING FIRST ESKIMO TO EMBRACE CAUSE BAHUULLAH GRIEVOUS LOSS. HER UNSTINTING SERVICES ADMINISTRATION AND TEACHING FIELDS FOR NEARLY FOUR DECADES IN ALASKA AND NORTHWEST UNITED STATES DESPITE LIFELONG PHYSICAL HANDICAP DESERVE SPECIAL MENTION ANNALS FAITH AMERICAN BAHAI COMMUNITY. EXTEND LOVING SYMPATHY ASSURANCE PRAYERS TO HER HUSBAND EUGENE KING. SUPPLICATING HOLY THRESHOLD PROGRESS HER SOUL KINGDOMS GOD.

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Picture in Upper Right Corner with the Caption: Ludmila Van Sombeek

LUDMILA VAN SOMBEEK

1893-1979

Certain moments are emblematic of a lifetime. One evening in Durham, North Carolina, in the 1960s, a period of civil rights conflict in the southern United States, Ludmila Van Sombeek circulated among a large, happy, multi-racial gathering in her home, speaking of the beauty of unity in diversity, the significance of this century, and the mission of Bahá'u'lláh. She paused momentarily to place a pillow at the back of an African student who had spent a weekend in her home recuperating from months in hospital. Without pausing in sharing the Bahá'í Message, she brought comfort to one in need. This gesture exemplified her life of ceaseless teaching of the Faith in words and, inseparably, in thoughtful and deeply caring service to those of all races, nationalities and strata of society.

Born Ludmila Ott on 30 July 1893 in Vienna, Austria, she experienced early the feelings of a minority. She attended a Lutheran school in predominately Catholic Vienna. In 1916 she sailed to the United States, her parents fearing that she would not have the opportunity for education in war-torn Europe. In New York she studied nursing at the Jewish Training School, Brooklyn Hospital. Enduring language difficulties, heavy work and diphtheria sensitized her to the needs of those experiencing isolation, prejudice and despair. Her adoption of a sickly baby and of a foundling, after her marriage to Adolph George Bechtold, were an expression of this understanding. In this period she attended firesides at the home of Antoinette 'Aunty' Foote in Brooklyn and, in 1922, became a devout Bahá'í.

After the death of her husband, Ludmila studied optics and business management and served as president of Bechtold Optical Company for ten years before retiring to devote her energies to sharing the Message and to engaging in human relations activities. The organizations with which she became most actively involved were ones focusing on America's 'most challenging issue'. For her, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People in New York, and the Urban League in Harlem, became centers for action and for relating the spiritual message to the cause of justice and harmony. She became a friend of Mary White Ovington, one of the founders of the N.A.A.C.P.; of Walter White, its long-time executive secretary; of George Schuyler, the Pittsburgh Courier columnist, and of many other humanitarians. Ludmila's participation in the work of various civic and religious organizations provided many opportunities to speak of the Faith and to promote unity. She was invited to speak to college audiences in Tennessee, Pennsylvania, Indiana and Alabama, and often addressed organizations working for inter-religious understanding. On one trip to the north, Ludmila met Matthew Bullock, a black lawyer, chairman of the Massachusetts Parole Board and Advisory Board of Pardons, and president of the Community Church of Boston. Ludmila's answers to his questions and her friendship over many years led him to accept the Faith in 1940. Her home was always open; often thirty guests would dine and enjoy music and experience the joy of diversity.

With her marriage to Georg Van Sombeek another chapter in Ludmila's life began.

They moved as pioneers to Durham, North Carolina. In the south, as in the north, Ludmila concentrated on the improvement of race relations through guest recitals at

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her grand piano, dinner parties and literary evenings. In addition she addressed many church groups, university audiences and civic organizations. She became active in the International League for Peace and Freedom, the National Council for Negro Women, the Y.W.C.A., the Business and Professional Women's Club, the Durham Committee on Negro Affairs, and resumed her long-time activity with the N.A.A.C.P. Traveling throughout the south, she was in Montgomery, Alabama, when the boycott of 1955-1956 was at its height. She befriended the Martin Luther King family. She frequently worked eighteen hours a day visiting the sick, offering gifts to the needy, comfort to the desolate, sweets to the neighborhood children. The formation of the first Local Spiritual Assembly of Durham in 1962 was an achievement for which she had labored diligently.

A profound spiritual commitment followed her pilgrimage in 1953 when she met the Guardian. Shoghi Effendi's request that she visit countries behind the Iron Curtain was answered by her 1958, 1963, 1965 and 1967 trips to Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Bulgaria and, until she became incapacitated, by her correspondence with many friends living there. In these countries she visited friends who had heard of the Faith through Martha Root and spoke with people from all walks of life. She was fluent in German and Czech and had studied Esperanto. She spoke at Austrian and French Bahá'í schools and firesides in Europe; attended the International Conference in Kampala, Uganda, in 1953 and did some teaching in Africa; toured Russia in 1958; made a pilgrimage to Írán in 1967 and addressed an audience of 400 Bahá'í college students; traveled to Panama, the Virgin Islands and, in the continental United States, from Maine to California — each journey providing opportunities to speak, show slides, inspire action.

Ludmila was active in Bahá'í institutions through the years. She was a member of the Local Spiritual Assembly of New York City in the 1930s and of Durham, North Carolina, from 1962 until 1969 when she moved west. She served on the Africa Teaching Committee, the Interracial Service Committee and was active in teaching children and youth at Bahá'í summer schools.

What was the power of this remarkable woman? A fervent commitment to the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh, an unwavering belief in the efficacy of prayer, a creative approach to living that mobilized all her experiences and talents in teaching the Faith, and a remarkable balance between sharing the Word and serving humankind. In its cable at the time of her death on 7 September 1979 in Phoenix, Arizona, the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States deplored the loss of this **INDOMITABLE TEACHER** and expressed admiration of her **FEARLESS PROMOTION [OF THE] ONENESS OF MANKIND DURING [THE] DARK PERIOD OF RACIAL PROBLEMS [WITHIN] OUR COUNTRY**, stating that the **SPLENDOR [OF] HER RADIANT EXAMPLE AS [AN] UPHOLDER [OF THE] RIGHTS [OF THE] DOWNTRODDEN SHALL NEVER FADE**.

Informed of her passing, the Universal House of Justice cabled:

GRIEVED LEARN PASSING ABHA KINGDOM LUDMILA VAN SOMBEEK OUTSTANDING MAIDSERV
FAITH BAHAUULLAH. ASSURE FRIENDS FAMILY OUR LOVING SYMPATHY AND PRAYERS SACRED
SHRINES PROGRESS HER SOUL.

(Based on a memoir by JEAN NORRIS SCALES)

RUHOLLAH FOROUGHÍ

(RÚHU'LLÁH FURÚGHÍ)

1915-1979

Rúhu'lláh Furúghí was born in Isfahán in 1915. His father accepted the Bahá'í Faith when he was a child, a fact that would change the destiny of Rúhu'lláh, his eldest son. While in his teens his mother passed away. This loss was also contributory to the future course of his life, thoughts and feelings. When he was just twenty he enlisted in the Army and remained in active service for almost three decades. He was a prisoner of war during part of World War II.

In 1940 he married Mulúk Pírmurádíyán. This gave another wing to his soul which had already been in the service of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh for a few years during which he had read in Persian and Arabic most of the numerous Bahá'í books and writings his father kept in his large personal library. His wife

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Picture in Upper Right Corner with the Caption: Rúhu'lláh Furúghí

was a staunch believer and following their marriage Rúhu'lláh's activities increased. I well remember their fireside meetings in Isfahán which were attended by people from all walks of life including mullas and professors. Teaching enquirers, and teaching their children, were their principal aims in life.

In response to the constant appeals for pioneers which the beloved Guardian had raised in his messages, he resigned his rank of Colonel and, in consultation with the National Teaching Committee of Írán, settled in Spain in October 1958 with his wife and five children (the youngest, one year of age, the eldest fifteen). They had no knowledge of the language nor of the circumstances obtaining in their chosen goal. Many were the members of his family who neither understood nor approved of his decision. From the moment they arrived they dedicated themselves to teaching the Faith. I vividly remember him attempting to teach some friends who knew little French, using his two dictionaries, French-Iranian and French-Spanish. After spending nine months in Barcelona he moved with his family to Mallorca to assist with the formation of the Local Spiritual Assembly.

Three years later the family pioneered once more, this time to Granada where there had been no Bahá'ís before. The dream of opening a town to the Faith was at last a reality. Soon firesides were organized and were attended by an increasing number; in this way local people began to embrace the Faith of

Bahá'u'lláh. He lived to see a well-established Bahá'í community in Granada with many local believers and an active and functioning Local Spiritual Assembly.

In 1975 he was elected a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Spain, and in 1978 was privileged to attend the fourth International Convention for the election of the Universal House of Justice. He led a group of Bahá'í youth on a teaching trip of several weeks' duration in Ireland and travelled thousands of miles across Spain giving public talks and carrying out different tasks in service to the Cause. During the last two years of his life he served as National Treasurer of the Spanish Bahá'í community.

Mr. Egea Martinez wrote of him in an article published in the national Bahá'í bulletin of Spain: 'I had the honour of being his friend and of accompanying him for the thousand of kilometres we travelled in his car, always at the service of the Faith ... He was a great father, teacher and a good friend. He taught the Faith with firm authenticity and no compromises, no matter who his listeners were. Until the last few weeks of his life, although weak and ill, he remained active in the service of the Cause. This indeed was his last example of total commitment to the Faith he so ardently loved ... '

We have lost our father, a loving friend and an outstanding teacher.

The Universal House of Justice cabled on 10 September 1979:

GRIEVED NEWS PASSING RUHOLLAH FOROUGHI DEVOTED SERVANT BAHULLAH EXTEND LOVE SYMPATHY BEREAVED FAMILY ASSURE PRAYERS HOLY SHRINES PROGRESS HIS SOUL.

DR. D. FOROUGHI

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GLADYS ANDERSON WEEDEN

1906-1979

Knight of Bahá'u'lláh

SADDENED LEARN PASSING KNIGHT OF BAHULLAH GLADYS ANDERSON WEEDEN. HER SERVICE HAIFA DAYS BELOVED GUARDIAN TEACHING ACTIVITIES THROUGHOUT THE UNITED STATES AND AT PIONEER POST ANTIGUA WELL REMEMBERED. KINDLY CONVEY SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY CONCORD NEW HAMPSHIRE OUR GRATEFUL APPRECIATION CABLE AND ASSURANCE PRAYERS HOLY THRESHOLD PROGRESS HER SOUL KINGDOMS GOD.

Universal House of Justice, 16 September 1979

People seldom succeed in rounding out their own destiny, in fulfilling, even to a minor degree, their own potentiality. Not so Gladys Weeden. Of Swedish grandparents who had sought freedom of religious outlook in the New World, she was about five years old when her mother died in childbirth with the baby and Gladys's father found his burdens too heavy and disappeared; her mother's sister, Mrs. Anderson, legally adopted her; Gladys went to school until she finished eighth grade but her aunt now had children of her own and the cruel years of the great economic depression forced her to go to work; Gladys stayed at home to keep house and mind her much younger brother and sister. I can

remember nothing easy in Gladys's life; at sixteen, when the children were older, Gladys got her first job as salesgirl in a store. It is no exaggeration to say that she worked hard, all her life, until she died, a fact which certainly produced in her a strong and wonderful character. Raised in a strict Baptist atmosphere, she recalled that its church and Sunday school had made no deep impression on her. In her own words, it was not until the years of the Depression, in 1919, that '... people began to re-evaluate their lives ... there was a lack of everything, money in particular ... we realized that the material things ... were no support ... I began to start my spiritual thinking.' She was twenty-three years old.

Even to purchase petrol for an outing was a rare luxury, but on a sunny July day in 1932 Gladys and her husband, Frank Cotton, whom she had married in 1925, and from whom she divorced in 1941, went on a day's excursion to the White Mountains in New Hampshire with another couple. I (then Mary Maxwell) and Rosemary Sala¹ were motoring from Montreal to Green Acre in Eliot, Maine, and we all met at a sightseeing spot called Lost River. Years later Rosemary told Gladys that I had said to her: 'That girl is going to become a Bahá'í.' Thus began a very deep friendship that lasted forty-seven years.

Gladys came to see me in Green Acre and her first reaction — on seeing Bahá'ís of different races — was, 'O Lord, this is a religious place!' But the new friendship held firm and, combined with the love and teaching of my mother, May Maxwell, eventually brought Gladys into the Faith. She lived and worked in Haverhill, Massachusetts, but we met again at Green Acre in 1933 and also corresponded; a letter of mine to her, in 1934, seems to forecast the future: '... I feel you and I need each other in life as friends ... When you spoke this summer of that feeling you have, that some day there is something great for you to do, I know you are right and I know you will do it. Who knows, perhaps our paths lie together in some great service? I feel they do.'

Although Gladys did not become an enrolled Bahá'í until January 1937 in Worcester, Massachusetts, from the very beginning she blossomed in love for the Faith. In November 1935 she wrote her first spontaneous letter to Shoghi Effendi. In his reply the Guardian urges her to study the Teachings and prepare herself for 'intensive work in the field of teaching', and in his own handwriting assures her of 'my loving prayers for your spiritual advancement and for the complete realization of your highest hopes in the service of our beloved Faith ... may your endeavours be richly blessed by Bahá'u'lláh.' Before Gladys left Haverhill for Worcester she was already holding a weekly meeting for a few friends; in Worcester she taught the teenage children's class, telling me in one of her letters: 'I have so much love to give and I just lavish it all on them. I wish they were all mine.' A letter was duly sent to Shoghi Effendi about this activity and in his own writing he assures her: 'The clear evidences of your accomplishments in the service of our glorious Faith greatly

¹ See 'In Memoriam', p. 713.

Picture in Upper Right Corner with the Caption: Gladys Anderson Weeden

hearten me in my task. I am so glad to observe the signs of your activity, devotion and progress in promoting the interests of our beloved Cause. I wish you to persevere, nay to redouble your efforts, and not to feel disheartened under any circumstances ... ' This postscript became her mandate; to it she clung through thick and thin until her death.

During those Worcester years, because Gladys was devoted, creative and industrious, her Bahá'í activities steadily increased: she obtained publicity, organized new occasions for teaching enquirers, served on the Local Assembly, was appointed to the Regional Teaching Committee of the six New England States. She always aspired to new heights in her personal life, 'I have been attending a public speaking class all winter,' she wrote to me, 'and it has helped me a great deal. I have also tried to improve my English and increase my vocabulary.' Her longing to go forth and teach was steadily growing; once it was a dream that we two would go to Haiti; later it was Cuba and she started learning Spanish; as early as 1935 she wrote to me: 'We would like to curl up in some remote place for an indefinite stay, but our Bahá'í conscience will not let us. Life would hold no meaning if we could not feel we were doing something for the Faith ... you know darling I am going to do something. I am so positive of it ... ' Her chance came in 1942; during a Regional Committee meeting the urgent call for pioneers was raised; Gladys wrote to me, 'Out popped the words ... I'll go anywhere you want me to!' The goal of the Seven Year Plan — which would end in 1944 — was to establish a Local Assembly in each State of the Union. She was stunned by her audacity and thrilled at her chance! On 18 February 1942 she was installed as a pioneer in Battleboro, Vermont, with no need to take a job for the first three months so she could devote full time to teaching: 'I go out to walk and say the Greatest Name on every route I take ... ' This further great step in her Bahá'í life opened the door to many blessings. By April 1943 she had her Assembly and was on it; ' ... this new Assembly came forth,' she wrote to me, 'very much like the birth of a child with joy, pain and heartache. After the birth comes the responsibility of the child's future welfare and guidance.'

In September a man she was greatly attracted to accepted the Faith; he was Benjamin Dunham Weeden,¹ her future husband, a man with a singularly sweet nature, a cultured gentlemanly person who became a very convinced Bahá'í and who, in the twenty-two years of their marriage, brought her much happiness. By 1945 Gladys was chairman of the Battleboro Assembly, Ben secretary. The Cause was well established there but Gladys was not satisfied or happy; her task seemed accomplished but her relation to Ben was static, with no marriage in prospect. Again she reached out to me, as she had many times since I left North America in 1935, and wanted to meet me somewhere, anywhere, for a few weeks. My own responsibilities were crushing; my father, then seventy-one, was designing the superstructure of the Báb's Shrine and trying to carry on additional tasks for Shoghi Effendi who was very alone and very overworked himself at that

difficult period in our lives. When he saw that Gladys was free, supposedly, of personal ties, wanted

1 See 'In Memoriam', *The Bahá'í World*, vol. XV, p. 478.

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to leave Battleboro for good and was longing to be with me, he came and stood by my bed one day when I was ill and said, 'You can't go on like this', and then asked if I thought Gladys would be willing to come to me and serve in Haifa. On 4 February 1947 she wrote that my cable inviting her to come to Haifa had been received and she was in a dizzy whirl: 'Had a fairy godmother given me a wish that was dearest to my heart, the news in your cable fulfilled it!' On the morning of 30 March she was met in the Port of Haifa by my father, Sutherland Maxwell, and brought to the Western Bahá'í Pilgrim House which was to be her home for almost five years — years of great civil turbulence in what was then Palestine but soon became Israel, years when the Bahá'í pilgrimage was suspended. After praying in the Shrines, that same afternoon Gladys met the Guardian in the drawing-room of the Master's house; as usual, I was present. She had thought she might be called upon to help me in domestic duties and be my companion, but the Head of her Faith, sitting opposite her, welcoming her warmly, making her feel 'completely at ease and at home with him', had other ideas. She was never to forget 'the beauty of his face' or the 'resonant voice' or that 'it was just like a bubbling stream to hear him laugh' — or that 'Shoghi Effendi never did the possible, he always did the impossible, and he expected you to do that too'. It now seemed to Gladys this was what was expected of her! Next morning Mr. Maxwell would take her downstairs and introduce her to various key people, the eventual range of which included dealing with not only our local law firm, our bank and various business firms, but the local city and government officers of Haifa and 'Akká, as well as high-ranking officials in Jerusalem. In 1938 she had written to me, 'my lack of education pops up to disturb me' — but it did not disturb the Guardian who used her many capacities, and her willingness, to great advantage.

The first months, at four o'clock every afternoon, Gladys reported to the Guardian. 'I will always give you a plan of guidance,' she says he told her, 'if you find that you are unable to carry out this plan, you must report to me in detail and I will give you another plan ... but you must always tell me the truth.' Sometimes there were things to report that she knew would distress him and then these words were her protection, for her heart ached to have to add bad news to his burdens.

The feelings of Mr. Weeden — combined with a legacy that put him in a better financial position to marry — now came to a head; the upshot was that he would come to Haifa and be of assistance to Mr. Maxwell in building the Shrine. They were married on 20 March 1948 in Jerusalem. Ben was a distinguished-looking man; Gladys had a handsome, upright figure and always looked exceptionally neat and attractive. Together they attended many official functions, sometimes representing Shoghi Effendi, as well as social functions

connected with the American Consul in Haifa and other prominent people. Gladys had a real gift for friendship and did a great deal, in the new State, to back up the esteem in which the Head of the Faith was already held. I was sad that Ben's health should become the cause of their returning to America just as our local Bahá'í life entered a new and wonderful phase. During November 1950 Shoghi Effendi invited five members of what was to be the future International Bahá'í Council to come and serve in the Holy Land: Lutfu'lláh Hakím, Jessie and Ethel Revell, then Mason Remey, and Amelia Collins all arrived in Haifa before Gladys and Ben left at the end of February 1951, the idea being that they would go back for Ben's medical treatment and return later to Haifa. The Guardian — who for the first time since pilgrimage had been suspended before the war, resumed his custom of having a meal at the Pilgrim House table — announced to us all that we were members of the new and historic Council he was forming; Gladys and Ben's membership remained in abeyance until it later became clear that they would no longer be serving in the Holy Land.

Gladys then suffered the greatest test of her life: Ben was very run down, and she adored him. On the other hand there had been no time, nor indeed necessity, as they were supposedly returning, to hand over all the Guardian's highly involved work to the newcomers. When Gladys wrote making it clear that because of Ben's condition they would not be coming back, Shoghi Effendi immediately cabled her, on March eighteenth,

BEN SHOULD REMAIN CARE DOCTOR. YOUR

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PRESENCE ALONE NOT LATER APRIL FIFTEENTH ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY. DO NOT WORRY. PRAYING FERVENTLY SHOGHI.

Gladys's love for the Faith, her loyalty to the Guardian, the self-discipline a hard life with many sorrows had taught her, now came to her rescue; she left Ben and returned alone. So that summer of 1951 Gladys was still the trusted postman; she held the affairs at the World Centre firmly in hand during Shoghi Effendi's absence; she not only assisted the new co-workers to understand the work, the restrictions and responsibilities of the World Centre, but launched them socially in Haifa through her good public relations and many friendships.

In November the Guardian and I returned to Haifa and she rejoined her Ben who was in good spirits and greatly improved in health. Serving the Cause becomes a habit, indeed it should become a habit. Gladys and Ben now offered their services to the American National Spiritual Assembly; after meeting with them it was agreed they would tour the country and stimulate the Bahá'ís during the final year of their second Seven Year Plan. Gladys wrote to me on 2 April 1952, 'We both feel we should do what we can to help this homefront situation.' They bought a car, motored to all forty-eight States of the Union and visited the friends in seventy-five major Bahá'í communities! By December they were tired out and withdrew to Vermont, but the National Teaching Committee requested them to help out in Greensboro, North Carolina, to which they retired to recover and to serve.

In April 1953 we met at the Centenary celebrations and inauguration of the Guardian's great Ten Year Plan; in July Dorothy Baker, the Hand of the Cause and an old friend, wrote them suggesting they pioneer to the West Indies which, she assured them, was 'just ready to pop ... if you act, act fast ... ' On 16 October the Weedens arrived in Antigua, a tiny island in the Leeward group of the Caribbean; everything was very unfortunate: there had been a terrible drought; prices were prohibitive; far from living, as they had been assured, on their income, they faced a heavy annual deficit; housing was astronomically dear; their hotel was about to go into 'season' prices of thirty per cent increase. After two months they left — 'to lick our spiritual wounds and straighten out our financial debts', as Gladys wrote me. Nevertheless, they received the immortal title of Knights of Bahá'u'lláh. Tired and discouraged, they settled in Henniker, New Hampshire, a very small New England town where Ben was to live sixteen years and Gladys twenty-five. It was the end of their spectacular services, a fact which weighed heavily on Gladys.

Ben, who was fourteen years Gladys's senior, died in 1970 after an illness that had been harrowing for both of them. Gladys wrote to me, 'After I have made my adjustment to this loss, I know there is plenty for me to do ... ' Her gift for speaking led to many invitations to give courses in Bahá'í Summer Schools, very often on the subject of the Guardian and her years of service in Haifa. Our own deep friendship never failed us; in 1973, after an absence of three years and ten months, I found that the Master's house needed radical renovation and asked her to come and help me. Although we had met during my visits to America and at the dedication of the Panama Temple, this was her first visit to Haifa since the days of the beloved Guardian. She stayed almost five months; we both worked very hard and very happily together; when she left I wrote to her that 'no words from either of us could express what it had meant'.

In 1974 I was able to spend a few days in her home in Henniker and always hoped to repeat it for a longer visit. Again in the spring of 1977 Gladys returned to Haifa, this time for a much shorter visit. During the last years of her life she kept busy, going twice to Vancouver, visiting the Alaskan Bahá'ís for a month, paying her respects at Shoghi Effendi's grave in London, going on a trip to Ireland, giving courses at Summer Schools. In the winter of 1977-1978 she spent some months in Wilmette at the invitation of the American National Assembly to help out on a long backlog of letters. In June 1979 she wrote to me: 'I don't feel old but I am now in my seventy-fourth year and that makes you realize that eighty is the next landmark, heavens! ... I keep happy and contented even though I miss my dearest Ben more as the years roll by ... ' In September at the suggestion of the National Assembly she went to speak on the Guardian at a

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Bahá'í event in New Mexico; returning home very tired, she died in Hebron, New Hampshire, on the thirteenth, peacefully, in her sleep. An enviable end to a beautiful life.

RÚHÍYYIH

ALLAN RAYNOR

1910-1979

Allan Raynor's legacy was formed with the tools of integrity, concentration and obedience. Long after the thousands of Allan's students and friends have themselves found their own ways to the Abhá Kingdom, the Canadian Bahá'í community will still be building on the foundations of his achievements.

Allan Frederick Raynor was the eldest of four children. He was born in Toronto, Canada, at midnight on 31 August 1910 of Anglo-Irish Protestant ancestry. His father, Fred, a hard-working merchant, was a stern disciplinarian. His mother, Bertha, instilled in her children a profound respect and love for God and His worship. Both Allan and his younger sister, Joyce, were in time privileged to recognize the station of Bahá'u'lláh.

Allan's early years were difficult, beset by illnesses and the economic crisis of the late 1920s. He left school for a secure job at Toronto City Hall where he stayed for seven years. In 1936 a new opportunity offered itself which was to change the course of his life. He won a job as a door-to-door life insurance salesman in Ottawa and worked in both Ontario and Quebec. Many of his clients were French Canadians, so he learned enough French to do his job. Despite the trauma of the sudden death of his father in 1937 he was able to concentrate on self-education. He had already studied business administration by correspondence, and now he prepared for his professional designation. Chartered Life Underwriter. So successful was he in his new business that he soon came to the attention of senior company management. Among those managers was one John A. Robarts who was looking for bright, enthusiastic recruits. Allan was transferred back to Toronto in 1937. In time he became a founder of the Estate Planning Institute of Canada and gained wide recognition for his dedication, sincerity and integrity.

His first acquaintance with Bahá'ís was in 1934 at a gathering organized by W. J. Christie of Parry Sound in northern Ontario. It was there that he met Lloyd Gardner.

Picture in Upper Left Corner with the Caption: Allan Raynor

In 1942 Allan met and married Evelyn Marie Johnson, daughter of a mixed Protestant-Catholic family of Toronto merchants. In that same year he joined the Canadian Army. Allan had been strong and healthy. However, a blood infection attacked his ears which had already been weakened by the scarlet fever of his youth, and he was discharged from the Army with only ten per cent hearing.

Allan sought to aid his fellows. He was so concerned with the effects of alcohol on both fellow soldiers and friends that he travelled to New York City to research, then became a founder and active member of Alcoholics Anonymous in Toronto. Throughout his life he continued to be singularly generous not only with his time but with his earnings.

Throughout this period of early testing, Allan was sustained by his new friend and manager, John A. Robarts, who stepped into a role which Allan's own father had never

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really known how to fill. John and Allan spent many evenings together, Allan unburdening himself and John listening, waiting, counselling and offering encouragement.

In 1945 the war ended, an important year for Allan who recognized that 'I had no religion for my newborn son and I thought I should have one'. During a visit to the Robarts' home he asked to borrow a Bahá'í book. While John sought out just the right one for his dearly loved friend, Allan began to read a book of Bahá'í prayers. In those few words he recognized the Voice of God. No more reading was necessary — Allan had found his Lord.

Allan's enthusiasm could never be ignored, least of all by his wife. Evelyn was challenged by this new belief. When she was forced to stop teaching Sunday School because her husband was considered to be a 'pagan', Evelyn accepted the challenge. She studied by herself and then accepted the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, contributing both a fresh and vigorous presence to the Canadian Bahá'í community and an outstanding example of warmth and hospitality. Together, Allan and Evelyn joined the Gardners, George Spendlove and others to form the first Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of North York, a borough of Toronto. The tragic loss of an infant daughter, Susan, in 1952 marked Allan deeply but a healing compensation arrived with the birth of first Bruce, then Rosemary, to keep Doug and John company.

In 1945 Allan was elected to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Canada. It was then that he began to make sterling contributions to Bahá'í life in Canada. During this period from 1954 to 1960 he served the National Assembly as vice-chairman and additionally chaired the National Teaching Committee. He again served on the National Spiritual Assembly in 1963-1964. It was also during this period that his intense need to understand as much as he could began to stimulate so many others. Study at Canadian Summer Schools took on a special meaning when Allan was there to ask, 'On what page of the Writings did you find that?' Many youth of that and later periods attracted his attention, his patience and his very generous devotion to ensure their fullest possible understanding of the fundamental verities of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh.

In 1956 Allan made his first pilgrimage to the Holy Land. The joy of pilgrimage under the guidance of Shoghi Effendi became the fulcrum against which he applied the lever of his convictions. He not only experienced the exultation of this visit but, to his embarrassment, illness required him to extend his stay, as is noted in Messages to Canada, as a guest of the World Centre. The beloved Guardian took full advantage of the visit to enquire about the progress of the Cause in Canada (and in particular to clarify the status of the purchase of the Hazíratu'l-Quds), and then used Allan's ongoing trip to South Africa to assure

a direct communication with the beleaguered friends in Egypt via this trusted courier.

The sudden passing of the Guardian in 1957 was deeply felt by all who remember it. No sooner had Allan learned the news than he left on the next airplane for London. His grief was, however, a mixture of personal loss and an apprehension of danger for the Bahá'í community, a fear that attempts would be made to violate the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh. He intensified his own deepening in the Covenant — which was to be the central theme of his teaching for the rest of his life — and then launched upon his mission. He travelled across Canada sharing with the friends his experiences at the table of Shoghi Effendi, his study of Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh and his methodical but vibrantly enthusiastic conviction of the inviolability of the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh. He wrote a brochure on the Covenant in which he collected and documented the Writings on this subject. He committed himself wholly to this work until the Canadian Bahá'í community had formed itself into a shield of the Covenant. When the assaults came from those misguided souls who had been deceived by their own vanity, Canadian Bahá'ís were not swayed. They knew the reality of their Covenant with Bahá'u'lláh. Allan's service was recognized in 1978-1979 in his appointment as an assistant to Auxiliary Board member for protection, Carol Bowie.

When no longer serving on the National Spiritual Assembly, Allan handled several special assignments. In 1962 he organized the travel of Canadian Bahá'ís to the 1963 World

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Congress in London, and in 1968, to Sicily and Israel for the commemoration of the centenary of the arrival of Bahá'u'lláh in the Holy Land. In 1971 he co-ordinated the North Atlantic Oceanic Conference in Iceland. But throughout this period he was most active on the various committees dealing with the legal affairs of the Faith in Canada. Their overall mandate was to 'assure the recognition of the independent nature of the Faith in the eyes of government'. Allan patiently negotiated recognition of Bahá'í marriage with the governments of many Canadian provinces, securing amendments to provisional legislation in Alberta and Nova Scotia. He deepened the knowledge of Bahá'ís across Canada on the unique corporate status of Local Spiritual Assemblies. In 1971 the National Spiritual Assembly created the Office of Legal Affairs to enable Allan to perform these several duties as an executive agent to the National Assembly.

Allan's active professional work had ended in 1968. A semi-retirement was warranted by the early onset of arteriosclerosis and an aneurysm. Time was limited. Indeed, one doctor whom Allan knew well confided to him that he would probably live for ten more years. Thoroughly professional in planning his life, Allan knew he had work yet to do and he did it. In 1970 he organized a pilgrimage to Israel and Írán for fifteen Canadian Bahá'ís including his whole family. He again made pilgrimage to Haifa in 1973 and in 1977. During

this last visit Allan sought the spiritual guidance and strength to face his ultimate test. From his extensive experience with doctors in life insurance he knew that his time had come. In September 1977 his bladder was removed.

The Bahá'í friends offered Allan their prayers. While he welcomed these prayers he repeatedly asked that they be not for his health but for his steadfastness. His fear of God was real and tangible. During the last months of his life he continued to teach and deepen the friends. In December 1978 he discovered that the ulcer in his bladder had been a tumour and had spread. His lungs were affected. On 21 March 1979 he was given six months to live.

He was determined to remain active. The 'Coping with Cancer' agency were so impressed with his positive attitude that he was among five patients who were interviewed extensively for a film on cancer treatment. Throughout the last summer of his life Allan was in and out of hospital for chemotherapy. But he continued to travel and to conduct deepening classes on the Covenant. In his hospital room he kept teaching. Between visitors he telephoned his farewell message to other friends. To his last day he repeated his request for prayers for his steadfastness. When the time came, Allan was able to show all those who had prayed for him the power of their prayers. He reached out for his tattered copy of Gleanings and clutched it to his heart. With that, in the early hours of 25 September 1979, Allan Raynor ascended to meet his Lord.

So moving and eloquent was he at the hour of his death that Canada's national newspaper printed a major article on his life. Roger White published in The Witness of Pebbles his poem written in tribute to Allan — 'In Recognition' — which was inspired during Allan's 1977 pilgrimage. And in his Spirit in Action: Teaching the Bahá'í Faith, Nathan Rutstein paid homage in a chapter called 'The Example of Allan Raynor'.

In its cable of 27 September 1979 the Universal House of Justice paid final tribute in these words:

SADDENED LEARN PASSING ALLAN RAYNOR DEVOTED STALWART SERVANT BLESSED BEAUTY
PILLAR FAITH CANADA MANY YEARS SERVICE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY PROMOTER FAITH TO LA
MOMENT EARTHLY LIFE. KINDLY CONVEY WIFE FAMILY LOVING CONDOLENCES ASSURANCE
ARDENT PRAYERS SACRED THRESHOLD PROGRESS HIS NOBLE SOUL ABHA KINGDOM. SUGGES
HOLD BEFITTING MEMORIAL MEETING HIS BEHALF.
DOUG RAYNOR

BAHÁR VUJDÁNÍ
1922-1979

Bahá'ís have been heavily pressed to recant their faith and in one case a believer, who refused to do so, followed the glorious path of the martyrs and was executed.

Universal House of Justice, Message to the Bahá'ís of the world, Náv-Rúz
1980

Picture in Upper Right Corner with the Caption: Bahár Vujdání

Mr. Bahár Vujdání, a devoted Bahá'í of Míyánduáb, pioneered to Mahábád, in West Adhirbáyján Province, north-western Írán, in 1954 and established himself as a merchant. His scrupulous honesty and personal integrity won him great respect in the business community and he was well known and much liked by the citizens of his adopted city because of his sincerity and friendliness. Mr. Vujdání found much happiness in serving the Bahá'í Faith and often was elected a delegate from his region to the Annual Convention.

In his fifty-seventh year, with all the good that the life of this world offers within his grasp, he was torn from the bosom of his family to join the ranks of those who have been martyred for the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh in His native land. On 26 September 1979, Mr. Vujdání was called before the Revolutionary Court and falsely accused of participating in a political disturbance. During the course of the interrogation he explained that as a Bahá'í he was forbidden to participate in political or subversive activities. At the mention of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh the presiding Judge, Shaykh Khalkhálí, abandoned the line of questioning relevant to the purpose for which Mr. Vujdání was summoned before the court and pressed him to recant his faith. He was offered his freedom on condition that he repudiate the Bahá'í Faith and embrace Islám. When refusal was forthcoming, the Judge offered as an alternative the paying of a substantial sum of money. Mr. Vujdání explained that as a Bahá'í he found it necessary, as a matter of principle, to reject the idea of paying what would amount to a ransom. A disturbance outside the courtroom at this point engaged the attention of the Judge and other Court officials, and the prisoner was released. He was permitted to return to his home and was told that, if necessary, he would be summoned to reappear before the Court the following day. It was 7:00 p.m. and he had been called for interrogation in the morning hours.

The following day Mr. Vujdání was called back before the Revolutionary Court at 10:00 a.m., and at 11:30 a.m. was condemned to death and placed in prison where, after several hours, confirmation of the decree was read to him. According to some fellow prisoners who were later freed, Mr. Vujdání received the news calmly and, with the greatest courtesy, invited the other prisoners to share the bread, cheese and melons he had brought from home, spreading these before them with a happy smile as if inviting them to a feast. 'We were struck with wonder,' one prisoner said. 'How could he have been so radiantly happy on the eve of his execution!'

Mr. Vujdání was able to obtain a fragment of lightly-waxed corrugated paper that had lined a biscuit tin and, in a firm hand, he wrote on it a final message to his family. This document, which has been preserved, reads:

'To the family of Vujdání: Mansúrih Khánum, Nayyírih, Munírih, Humáyún, Bizhan, Mr. Ma'naví, Engr. and Mr. Hasan-'Alí Khán, Engr.

'I have been condemned to death because I have refused to recant my faith and my submission to the Bahá'í religion. I do not know when the time of execution will arise. However, I bid farewell to all.'

This done, he turned with dignity to the

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Picture at Top of Page with the Caption: The fragment of paper lining from a biscuit tin upon which Mr. Bahár Vujdání wrote a last message to his family before his martyrdom on 27 September 1979 in Mahábád.

Qiblih,¹ and to the astonishment of his fellow prisoners offered prayers.

At 3:30 p.m. on 27 September 1979, Mr. Vujdání and three other prisoners who were not Bahá'ís were taken from the prison to an adjacent courtyard where repeated shots were heard to ring out. The bodies of the executed men were unceremoniously left in the yard of the nearby clinic and their families were instructed to remove them for burial. A notice was posted next to the clinic on which there appeared the names of the dead prisoners and the charges on which they had been tried. 'Bahá'í religion' was written beside Mr. Vujdání's name in the place where the charge was set out. Later it was noticed that someone had drawn a line through the words 'Bahá'í religion'.

Thus it was that Bahár Vujdání was called upon to tread the path of martyrdom as had thousands of his fellow Bahá'ís before him in the land of Bahá'u'lláh's birth.

Approximately two thousand people — most of whom were not Bahá'ís — attended the funeral to honour a man whose kind demeanour and reputation for honesty had attracted the friendship and respect of the community of Mahábád.

FRANZ PÖLLINGER
1895-1979

DEEPLY GRIEVED PASSING DEARLY LOVED FRANZ POLLINGER LONG RECORD HIS OUTSTANDING SERVICES HIS EXAMPLE STEADFASTNESS PATH FAITH WILL SHINE FOREVER IN ANNALS AUSTRIAN BAHAI COMMUNITY PRAYING HOLY SHRINES PROGRESS HIS RADIANT SOUL ABHAKINGDOM CONVEY FAMILY HEARTFELT SYMPATHY.

Universal House of Justice

As a small boy Franz Pöllinger was taken from Klagenfurt, Austria, where he was born in 1895, to live with his grandparents in the

¹ The direction toward which the faithful turn in prayer. The Tomb of Bahá'u'lláh is 'the heart and Qiblih of the Bahá'í world'.

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Picture in Upper Left Corner with the Caption: Franz Pöllinger

Turrach mountains. He had lost his father very early in life, and his mother was forced to work in the city to support the family. It soon became apparent that Franz could not see well. During the seven years he was able to attend school, he had great difficulty with subjects requiring use of his eyes. Later, because of poor eyesight, he was unable to retain any of the many jobs he attempted — working in a foundry, as a construction worker or as the pit boy

in a mine. He also worked for a time as a painter, as a fire boy in a coffee house, and in a theatre, until he finally found a position in the household of a nobleman in lower Austria. In his search for an ophthalmologist who could correct his failing eyesight, Franz went to Munich in 1914. The doctors in Germany were no more successful in curing his condition than those in Austria had been. He therefore made himself a monocle from a flashlight lens and was thus able to read a little with one eye.

While working in the household of the Bavarian envoy in Stuttgart, Mr. Pöllinger met Mr. Bauer, the household masseur, who befriended him. During a Sunday afternoon visit to the Bauer family, Franz mentioned that truth was more important to him than anything else. Mrs. Bauer told him that as a seeker of truth he should know that Christ had returned and had suffered imprisonment and exile for forty years. He was intrigued and asked to hear more. That Sunday was 23 May 1916, the anniversary of the Declaration of the Báb. As Mr. Pöllinger himself later related, 'At home I of course read the booklet, and those Words of Bahá'u'lláh, the Words of Wisdom, impressed me greatly. "My God," I thought, "how wide I can open my lungs to the air, as if my lungs were filled with ethereal air!" That was what I felt; I was electrified by the beauty of those Words. Thus I received the Bahá'í teachings — that was my commencement.'

Franz used the remaining time before returning to Vienna to study the Bahá'í Writings — in spite of his disability — and to visit deepening classes and firesides. He received answers to his many questions from Miss Alma Knobloch¹ who was his true spiritual teacher. He wrote to 'Abdu'l-Bahá and in return received a short Tablet in which the Master assured him of His prayers that he be able to successfully overcome self, acquire divine perception and be vivified by the eternal Glad Tidings. When he left Stuttgart to return to Vienna, his only solace was that in Vienna he was closer to the Holy Land and thus to 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Neither the fact that he was completely alone nor the severity of the period following World War I lessened his courage or diminished his love for the Cause.

In a Tablet to Alma Knobloch, who had written of Franz Pöllinger's deteriorating eyesight and of his search for an ophthalmologist, 'Abdu'l-Bahá responded that He prayed Mr. Pöllinger's eyes would be so enlightened that he would become a discoverer of reality in all stages of life. Franz recounted, 'I then realized that my earthly eyes were not of the same importance as the eternal eyes, the eyes of the soul, and that 'Abdu'l-Bahá had opened my eyes through His believers, through His friends. It was a great exultation!'

In the period that followed, during which

¹ See 'In Memoriam', *The Bahá'í World*, vol. IX, p. 641.

Franz found the first waiting souls in Vienna and in St. Veit an der Glan, he received his second Tablet from 'Abdu'l-Bahá:

'O thou who art thirsty for the water of Heavenly Life! Thy letter has been received. Its contents imparted great joy because they were expressive of firmness and steadfastness.

'I feel great kindness toward thee and supplicate eternal endearment and everlasting life for thee so that thou mayest in those regions raise the call of the Kingdom, delivering the people from the obscurities of the world of nature through the light of guidance, that thou mayest, like the Egyptian messenger, become the bearer of the garment of the heavenly Joseph, giving light to the eyes of the Jacobs and perfuming nostrils with the fragrances of the mantle of the Joseph of the Kingdom.

'Give the divine Glad Tidings to the friends in Vienna, so that they may attain to eternal blessings, obtain new life and acquire limitless rapture and joy.'

'These regions are greatly in need of the heavenly Glad Tidings because all have, through the severity of the calamities of the war, become disappointed, withered, faded and almost dead. So they are in need of the breath of life. This breath of life is simply the heavenly Glad Tidings. Nothing can relieve them from this sorrow, grief, depression, disappointment except the divine Glad Tidings.'¹

Because of his servitude and his love for Bahá'u'lláh, Franz Pöllinger was the magnet that drew a number of thirsting souls to the Ocean of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh. These souls formed the basis of the Viennese Bahá'í community. Later, at an institute for the blind where he learned basket weaving, he found a number of souls whose spiritual eyes were open and who recognized the truth of Bahá'u'lláh's message.

The first Local Spiritual Assembly of Vienna was formed in 1926. In the meantime, through Franz's indefatigable efforts, a fledgling Bahá'í community was established in Graz. During this period, Martha Root and Marzieh Carpenter (now Gail) arrived in Vienna. Franz was always ready to assist where he could: he organized public lectures, firesides and deepening classes, and found ways to introduce Martha Root to Austria's leading public figures. Although there was widespread unemployment in Vienna, he did not hesitate to leave his job whenever he felt called upon to serve.

After Shoghi Effendi assumed his office as Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith, he addressed Mr. Pöllinger in many letters as 'My dearest Franz.', 'My dear co-worker', or 'My dear and precious co-worker'. A postscript penned in his own hand in a letter written on his behalf on 7 September 1926 states, 'My dearest Franz: Your most welcome letter has profoundly touched me. Continue in your steadfast heroic efforts and never forget that your exemplary services are engraved in characters of gold upon the radiant scroll in the Abhá Kingdom. You occupy a warm and abiding place in my heart. Your unsparing efforts are drawing you closer and closer to the heart of the Cause. You are destined to render memorable services to our beloved Cause. If you but persevere, doors will be opened to your face, obstacles will be fast removed and you will witness the harvest for which you are preparing so devotedly. Write me in full

and frequently for I thirst for the glad-tidings of your letters. I will continue to pray for you from all my heart.' The Guardian's love and encouragement stimulated him to sacrifice even more of himself for the Cause of God.

Franz Pöllinger married Anna Mödlagl on 8 July 1935. From that time they trod the path of service and sacrifice together, with faces shining and their beings full of humour. However, the times were deteriorating noticeably as society lost its equilibrium and order vanished. Soon all meetings had to be registered with the police who sent a plain-clothes policeman to note all occurrences. The right of assembly was suspended entirely in 1937, which precluded further Bahá'í meetings. This was the beginning of a very sad time for the Austrian Bahá'í community. As most of the Bahá'ís in Austria were of Jewish ancestry, those who did not leave the country were deported to concentration camps. Mr. and Mrs. Pöllinger attempted to help wherever possible, at no little danger to themselves. At the end of World War II only a small number of Bahá'ís remained in Austria. With un-

1 Cited, in this translation, in *Star of the West*, vol. 13, no. 10, January 1923, p. 281, where the name of the recipient is erroneously given as Pallinger.

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daunted courage they began to rebuild the community. Franz even attempted to have the Bahá'í Faith officially recognized by the occupying powers.

Before the Guardian died he had stipulated that the National Spiritual Assembly of Austria should be formed in 1959. The necessary foundations were laid through the formation of the Local Spiritual Assemblies of Graz, Salzburg, Innsbruck and Linz whose establishment was aided through the efforts of pioneers from Írán, the Federal Republic of Germany and the United States of America. When the first National Spiritual Assembly was elected at Ridván 1959, Franz Pöllinger was one of the nine members.

In 1963, after forty-seven years, Franz's dearest wish was fulfilled. Alma Knobloch had taught him a prayer which expressed the desire to make a pilgrimage to 'Akká and Haifa. When the first Universal House of Justice was elected, Franz Pöllinger was present. His dream was fulfilled, his patience rewarded.

In the following years there were very few activities in which he did not take part, whether summer or winter schools, seminars or firesides, youth camps or teaching activities. His humorous contributions, filled with the varied experience of his life, enriched every meeting. At the close of the Five Year Plan (1973-1978), as the Austrian Bahá'í community reached a new level of development, he was able to witness the fruits of his lengthy and untiring effort in the service of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh.

In the final weeks of his life, Franz Pöllinger felt as if he were being called home. At last he could hasten to meet 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi,

whose mandate to spread the divine Glad Tidings in Austria he had never neglected. After sixty-three years of loyal service, his shining soul winged its way back to its Creator. Our prayers accompany it.

KAMBIZ POOTSCHI

OTTILIE RHEIN

1903-1979

Knight of Bahá'u'lláh

Otilie Rhein, named by the beloved Guardian a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for having pioneered to the Island of Mauritius in 1953,¹ passed on to the Abhá Kingdom on 29 October 1979 in San Mateo, California. She was laid to rest in the beautiful hills overlooking an expanse of the great Pacific Ocean.

Oceans were not a barrier to Otilie's adventuresome spirit. She was to cross and recross the Atlantic, the Pacific and the Indian Oceans by both sea and air. She set goals for herself and went about accomplishing them regardless of the perils she might face. As a young girl she left her native Germany to seek adventure in the United States where she settled in Chicago and managed a building in which she rented rooms. One of her tenants, Betty Powers, had in her room a photograph of 'Abdu'l-Bahá which aroused Otilie's passing interest — she thought Him a Holy Man — but through changing her job Otilie lost contact with the Bahá'ís until 1941 when the distress and loneliness occasioned by World War II caused her to be drawn irresistibly to the Bahá'í Temple. After attending meetings conducted by Melvin Newport and Albert Windust, Otilie gave her heart and life to Bahá'u'lláh. 'The Guardian will pray that, in the days to come, you may render the Faith many lasting and noteworthy services,' Shoghi Effendi's secretary wrote to her on his behalf on 10 December 1942. Almost immediately Otilie arose to pioneer in Arizona to fill a goal of the Seven Year Plan in that State. From here she moved to San Mateo, California, where her dear Bahá'í friend, Mrs. Lisette Berger, made her welcome. San Mateo became the base to which she would return from her various international pioneering posts when necessity dictated. As a naturalized citizen of the United States she could not be away from the country for more than five years without losing her citizenship.

Otilie was present at the International Conference in Chicago in 1953 when the beloved Guardian launched the Ten Year Crusade. All hearts were touched and a flood of volunteers arose in response to the call for pioneers. But Otilie was always a person of action and she was one of the first to put her affairs in order and leave. She stored some of her belongings with Mrs. Berger and departed

¹ Shoghi Effendi, *Messages to the Bahá'í World*, p. 57.

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Picture in Upper Left Corner with the Caption: Otilie Rhein

with only minimal luggage. She had thought of joining Rex and Mary Collison in

Uganda but the Guardian had specified the settlement of virgin areas so she determined to go to Mauritius, an island mentioned by name in 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Tablets of the Divine Plan and one 'whose name was enshrined in Bahá'í history during the Heroic Age ... as the source, two years before 'Abdu'l-Bahá's arrival in America, of a contribution towards the purchase of the site of the Mother Temple of the West'.¹ She poured over maps, atlases and encyclopedias but could discover very little about the island except that it had a mixed population, that sugar cane was the chief crop raised and that French and English were spoken. But that was enough for her, and excitedly she boarded a ship at Mombasa after having visited Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika (now Tanzania). She arrived in a heavy downpour on 11 November 1953. Shoghi Effendi's cable — ASSURE RHEIN LOVING APPRECIATION — was relayed to her on 4 December by Paul E. Haney, then chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States.

Otilie's utter trust in Bahá'u'lláh enabled her to overcome the difficulties she encountered. She rejoiced at obtaining a visa which was good for six months and which later was extended to three years plus three months. With the assistance of a German missionary she found a house which offered the barest necessities but which provided a setting for Bahá'í meetings. Her first shopping expedition, occasioned by the urgent need to acquire mosquito netting, led her to a shop whose proprietor, Mr. Him Lim, a Chinese, became the first resident of Mauritius to accept the Faith. When she had enrolled two Bahá'ís and had interested a number of inquirers, Mr. Jalál Nakhjavání,² and later another Persian believer, visited the island and assisted with the teaching work. By 1956, just before her visa expired, there were forty Bahá'ís, enough to form three Local Spiritual Assemblies. Although some vacillated at the last moment, Otilie was determined not to be deprived of victory. By sheer determination she confirmed some new believers and induced others to change residence with the result that there were established — as she later recorded — 'three Local Spiritual Assemblies for the three years of teaching'. A strong and self-reliant foundation had been laid. This victory made it possible for Mauritius to send a delegate to the historic first Regional Convention convened at the farm of Mr. and Mrs. William Sears, near Johannesburg, South Africa, at Ridván 156. But Otilie's service in Mauritius was at an end. Her request for an extension of her visa was refused although she called upon the Governor who listened sympathetically to her appeal and was attentive to her explanation of the Faith. This same gentleman — Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam — later became Prime Minister and addressed the Bahá'í Oceanic Conference held in Mauritius in August 1970. Otilie had the bounty of attending that gathering and of receiving his smile of recognition.

After leaving Mauritius she remained in Kampala for a time lending much needed assistance in the production of Bahá'í literature until it became necessary for her to return to the United States to safeguard her citizenship. But her restless spirit could not be idle

¹ The Universal House of Justice, *The Bahá'í World*, vol. XV, p. 299.

2 See 'In Memoriam', p. 797.

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when the Faith needed pioneers. By 1959 she had saved enough money to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land and then settle in Chile where, by living frugally, she was able to remain from 1960 until 1963. Chile was her last international venture, but in her home community of San Mateo she could always be depended upon to contribute her share to every activity. One of her greatest joys was to keep in touch with her Bahá'í friends throughout the world.

On 27 December 1978 the secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly of Mauritius wrote to Otilie Rhein, addressing her as 'Spiritual Mother of Mauritius', and conveying 'deep love and gratitude on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the establishment of the Faith in Mauritius ... It is highly significant that God's Message for this day was planted in this island by a lady. We turn our hearts in thanksgiving to Bahá'u'lláh that you were chosen for this and we pray to Him that He may shower all His blessings on you and bring you eternal joy and happiness. Present generations may not be aware of the import of such a feat by you, but your name will forever be associated with the Faith in Mauritius and future generations will befittingly mark the event of your first coming to Mauritius. It may not be without meaning that when you landed in Mauritius on that morning of Sunday, the 11th November 1953, it was raining heavily — the happy presage of a bountiful harvest ... ' And again, on 21 February 1979, 'We were deeply touched to read the copy of the letter the Universal House of Justice addressed to you on the 29th November 1978 and appreciate your kind thoughts for Mauritius. It is incredible that a quarter of a century has elapsed since you arrived in Mauritius. The seed you planted has grown and it has no doubt been sustained by your love, devotion and sincerity in the Cause of God ... We have now seventy-four Local Spiritual Assemblies ... '

Otilie remained in spirit a true pioneer right to the end. In her life she manifested the seven qualifications of the divinely enlightened soul mentioned by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in one of His Tablets: knowledge of God, faith, steadfastness, truthfulness, uprightness, fidelity and evanescence or humility. She was honoured at the time of her passing with the following cable from the Universal House of Justice:

SADDENED LEARN PASSING OTTILIE RHEIN DEVOTED MAIDSERVANT BLESSED BEAUTY KNIGHT
BAHAULLAH MAURITIUS STEADFAST PERSEVERING IN PIONEER POSTS MANY YEARS UNDER
DIFFICULT CONDITIONS. OFFERING LOVING PRAYERS SACRED THRESHOLD PROGRESS HER
VALIANT SOUL ABHA KINGDOM. KINDLY CONVEY CONDOLENCES HER FAMILY OUR BEHALF.
(Adapted from a memoir by VALERA F. ALLEN)

MABEL ADELLE SNEIDER
1901-1979

GRIEVED LEARN PASSING MABEL SNEIDER DEVOTED MAIDSERVANT BAHAULLAH LONGTIME
PIONEER GILBERT ISLANDS. KINDLY CONVEY SYMPATHY FAMILY FRIENDS. ASSURE LOVING

PRAYERS HOLY SHRINES PROGRESS HER SOUL ABHA KINGDOM.

Universal House of Justice, 28 January 1980

One must see the example of sincere love, patience, discipline and humility in order to believe in the existence of these qualities. Mabel Adelle Sneider possessed them all, and more. She was born in Casper, Wyoming, U.S.A. on 8 September 1901 and grew up on a cattle ranch in Thermopolis, Wyoming, acquiring a deep love for horses and the outdoors. After graduating from high school she attended Fort Collins Agricultural College and then studied nursing which was her lifelong profession. Mabel declared her faith in Bahá'u'lláh in 1946 in Panama where she worked at the Gorgas Hospital. When asked why she became a Bahá'í, she simply stated, 'It made sense.' From the moment she embraced the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh she devoted her time and effort to furthering its progress. Putting her pioneering spirit into action, she made long-range plans to pioneer for the Faith after she retired from nursing. Mabel was adventurous but practical in nature, and she loved to travel.

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Picture in Upper Left Corner with the Caption: Mabel Adelle Sneider

In 1953 Mabel had the privilege of making her pilgrimage and of meeting the beloved Guardian. Dorothy Baker and Millie Collins were also in the Holy Land at that time. The friendship that Mabel formed with these two outstanding believers exerted an influence which lasted the rest of her life.

One of the many services that Mabel performed for the Faith in Panama was that of assisting in the selection and purchase of the original land for the Panama House of Worship, a parcel that was later exchanged for the present Temple site. She went as a travelling teacher to Africa and to Central and South America. She retired after thirty years of service at the Gorgas Hospital and, on 17 July 1958, left Panama for the island of Tarawa, Gilbert Islands (now Kiribati), in the South Pacific, where she remained for fifteen years. Knowing what to expect when she reached her destination, she purchased a hand-operated machine for making cement blocks, a set of directions for making a native-style stove, and a bicycle which was her sole means of transportation. With the blocks she built herself a house based somewhat on an African model, and constructed a stove. Her residence on the island of Bikenibeu became widely known as 'Mabel's house'. Although there were discouraging moments, she wrote in March 1964, 'There have been rare cases when, having talked with someone of the Faith, you felt that great spirit, and then the feeling of having to come back into this world and walk on the roads again. You live in hopes of capturing these moments again ... How blessed, though, I am, for I do have the love and loyalty of many and they really love the Faith. Their lives have been completely changed and they are willing to devote their entire time to the teaching of the Faith. I am certain they are very dear to Bahá'u'lláh. This is one of the reasons you feel that this is your home and where you hope to stay.'

During her first few years in the islands Mabel spent most of her time

travelling to every island to meet the Bahá'ís and help them establish the Faith. She served on the National Spiritual Assembly of the Gilbert Islands which was formed for the first time in 1967 and held the offices of secretary or treasurer. She helped purchase the site for the National Hazíratu'l-Quds. She was twice a delegate to the International Convention in Haifa for the election of the Universal House of Justice. Her marriage in August 1965 to Mr. Tebakasro Aritiera ended in divorce in 1975 at which time she reverted to the use of her maiden name.

The need for medical attention forced Mabel to return to the United States in 1975. Even with severely impaired eyesight she vigorously served the Faith in Huntsville, Texas, whose lapsed Local Spiritual Assembly was formed again in 1978 with Mabel as chairman. The friends in Huntsville felt blessed to have her in their midst. She had an introverted personality. She was a listener and rarely spoke, but when she did she was mild, loving and honest; she had a child-like quality in her manner.

Mabel served Bahá'u'lláh's Cause to her utmost. Her intense love for the Faith and her determination to get things done were an inspiration to all who knew her. A few weeks before her passing, the local newspaper ran a picture of the Mother Temple of the West and featured the Bahá'í Faith as the religion of the week. As Mabel looked at the photograph of the House of Worship she remarked, 'I have done everything that I wanted to do for the

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Faith.' On 4 December 1979, in her seventy-ninth year, she passed away as the result of a stroke.

Picture in the Center Right Side of the Page with the Caption: Husayn Halabí (Husayn Rátibu'l-Halabí) 1921-1979

This believer, whose death occurred on 17 December 1979, was named a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh by Shoghi Effendi for his service in pioneering to Hadramaut in February 1954.

HELEN HAZEL WILKS
1903-1980

Helen Wilks was born on 31 March 1903 in Anderson, Indiana, U.S.A. Her father died in 1919, whereupon she went to live with an aunt and uncle in Bellingham, Washington, where she completed her education and became a teacher. Her first position was in a one-room schoolhouse in Glacier, Washington, near Mt. Baker. Many of her students were older than she was. She would walk to school through the snow with her legs bound in burlap bags. Before the students arrived it was her duty to start the fire in the wood-burning stove, chop enough wood for the following day, then sweep the floor.

During the depression, in the early 1930s, Helen worked as a clerk in a store. A co-worker, Anna Reed, walked across the aisle and whispered in her ear, 'Did you know Christ has returned?' Instead of dismissing this as the remark of a

fanatic or crank, Helen thought: 'If He has, where is He?' Helen's daughter, Phylis Kiehn, takes up the story: 'And so the seed was planted. Mother listened, studied, and decided that this strange new religion was not for her. She packed the Ford with her belongings and set off for Phoenix, Arizona, but, as I recall, we weren't there very long before she exclaimed that she must know more about this religion. She left us in Phoenix and hitch-hiked all the way back to Seattle, a distance of about 1,600 miles, in order to locate and further question Anna Reed. In 1934 mother became a confirmed Bahá'í and started a children's class at the Bahá'í Centre in the old Arcade Building in Seattle. The class was her first — I was "the children". After she remarried in 1936 the class comprised myself and my step-brother.'

William S. Wilks became a dedicated Bahá'í not long after his marriage to Helen. Over the years the couple moved seven times in the Seattle area in order to help establish new Local Spiritual Assemblies. At the London Congress in 1963 they made their plans for their greatest move — as pioneers to Africa. Would that space permitted the recounting of all their experiences in this new venture! On their first teaching trip, much to their astonishment, they found themselves snow-bound for three days in southern Africa. William — or 'Bill' as he was known — died on 14 December 1965, two days before his sixty-fifth birthday, and is buried in Mbabane, Swaziland. Helen survived him by fifteen years which were devoted to ceaseless teaching trips in some nine or more countries in the southern Africa area. Her passing on 3 January 1980, following a massive heart attack, ended a life of great service on this earth. Counsellor Shidan Fat'he-Aazam, alluding to the wish of a true soldier to die with his boots on, wrote of her:

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'Well, our dear Helen, whom we all know was a real and true soldier in the Army of Bahá'u'lláh, always had her boots on for fear she might have to face her Lord without them. Those of us who knew her and worked with her could bear witness to her love, her devotion and her self-sacrifice for our beloved Faith. She gave herself totally, body and soul, to Bahá'u'lláh. Every step she took, every breath she drew, was to promote the Faith of God. At the age of seventy-six her spirit and her energy were youthful — so full of happiness, life and vitality. Her contribution to our beloved Faith, both in her native land and in the continent of her adoption, Africa, was tremendous. She was an indefatigable teacher of the Faith — always on the go, constantly seeking contacts and giving the Message ... '

During the last fourteen years of her life Helen served the Faith as a member of the Auxiliary Board for Propagation, first in Swaziland and then in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), and was sent by the Continental Board of Counsellors for Africa on special projects in South Africa, Lesotho, Botswana, Zambia, Malawi, Seychelles and Mauritius. In all these places she will be remembered with deep love, admiration, awe and gratitude. In January 1980 Gary Worth, a fellow pioneer to Zimbabwe, paid tribute: 'Her spirit and enthusiasm, her energy, her sense of fun and laughter, and her desire to teach the multitudes about

Bahá'u'lláh were unmatched by any other person I have met in my lifetime ... despite age, failing health and poor eyesight, Helen had not decreased her activities on behalf of the Faith in the slightest bit. She begged for and scraped up valuable petrol coupons so that she could continue her teaching work in this war-torn country. She spent most of her small pension on petrol for her car. In this way she continued to bring the Bahá'í teachings to the people of this region through her never-failing spirit and love of life ... On the very day of her heart attack, Helen made an exhausting teaching trip to at least eleven areas and on her last evening attended a meeting of a local Bahá'í Women's Club. On her death-bed she sent a message to her teaching companion, Mr. Carlos Kaupo, an assistant Auxiliary Board member, encouraging him to continue teaching. He has been Helen's eyes and driver and teaching companion these past several months and deserves great praise for his efforts in assisting her. I am not qualified to speak of Helen Wilks's valiant services to the Faith, because she had reached a level of spirit and understanding which I do not comprehend. But with her passing, I am rededicating my life ... '

Picture in Upper Right Corner with the Caption: Helen Hazel Wilks

Helen's devoted services earned her the following cable sent by the International Teaching Centre to the Continental Board of Counsellors in Africa on on 7 January 1980:

GRIEVED NEWS PASSING MUCH LOVED DEVOTED SERVANT FAITH HELEN WILKS. HER LONG YEARS OUTSTANDING WORK TEACHING FIELD BAHAI EDUCATION CHILDREN IN HER NATIVE LAND AND HER HIGHLY EFFECTIVE SERVICES AS PIONEER AND BOARD MEMBER AFRICA UNFORGETTABLE. SUPREME BODY AND TEACHING CENTRE ASSURE ARDENT PRAYERS SHRINE PROGRESS HER RADIANT SOUL.

In a letter written on its behalf on 24 January 1980 the Universal House of Justice stated, 'It is the hope of the Universal House of Justice that the selfless and sacrificial efforts

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of friends like Helen Wilks may serve to inspire other friends in their aspirations for services to the Threshold of the Blessed Beauty, and to guide them in what they can achieve by devoting their resources to the advancement of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh.'

Helen's wish to 'die with her boots on' was granted. After her passing, comfort was taken in the knowledge that she took her flight to the Abhá Kingdom the way she always wanted, dying in service to God.

(Based on a memoir prepared by ELAINE EILERS for the Continental Board of Counsellors in Africa)

ISFANDIYAR GHOBAD

(ISFANDÍYÁR QUBÁD)

1895-1980

Picture in Lower Left Corner with the Caption: Isfandiyar Ghobad

Isfandiyar Ghobad was born into a Zoroastrian family in 1895 in Yazd, Írán . He was brought up in surroundings which were coloured by deep-rooted religious orthodoxy and tainted by ancestral superstitions, prejudices and rituals. As a young man his quest for religious truth was ardent. While still a school student he would frequently challenge, in the presence of the religious instructor, the validity of the concepts prevalent amongst his own people, in return for which he would be punished harshly and accused of having been influenced by the 'heresy' of the Bábí movement. These confrontations made his receptive soul even more sensitive to the light of divine guidance. At last, through a new bond of marriage in the family household, he came to hear about Bahá'u'lláh from his brother-in-law, a staunch Bahá'í. The seed of faith which had germinated in his heart soon became a fruitful tree as a result of the instruction and loving care of such prominent souls as Hájí Muhammad Táhir-i-Málmírí and Hájí Muhammad Táhir-i-Qandahárí.

Isfandiyar's recognition of Bahá'u'lláh at the age of twenty-two enkindled the flame of faith in the hearts of his entire family. Soon after his declaration he wrote to 'Abdu'l-Bahá and in reply he received an inspiring Tablet which instilled in his heart a new zeal and hope. He joined his father in trade but events forced him to leave his homeland for India and from there he proceeded to the Holy Land on pilgrimage. His arrival in the Holy Land coincided with the Guardian's departure from Haifa after the Ascension of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. As a result he attained the presence of the Greatest Holy Leaf whose loving grace and affection encompassed him for fifty days. During that period he was privileged to receive from her gracious hand a copy of the Tablet of the Holy Mariner in the handwriting of Shoghi Effendi, as well as a letter full of encouragement and assuring him of a subsequent visit. After a few months' sojourn in Cairo, the joyous news of the Guardian's return reached him. He again asked permission to come to the Holy Land and to his joy received a loving invitation in which the Guardian expressed his eagerness to welcome him. On 19 October 1924 he set off for Haifa and was honoured to bask for forty days in the sunshine of the loving kindness of the beloved Guardian. Isfandiyar's real spiritual life began to take shape during this memorable pilgrimage and the Guardian's parting words — 'Isfandiyar, I shall

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never forget you, be assured' — engraved themselves indelibly on his heart and became his 'best provision' for the rest of his life.

On his return to Írán he was appointed to serve on various administrative bodies of the Faith which were closely associated with activities of the Bahá'í youth and teaching. In later years he was elected to the Local Spiritual Assembly of Tihrán and he remained a member until he left Írán.

His third pilgrimage — this time accompanied by his wife and youngest daughter — took place in 1952, immediately before the launching of the Ten Year Crusade. They were among the pilgrims who heard from the Guardian's own

lips his glorious message about the unfoldment of divine destiny through the implementation of the Ten Year Plan; they were galvanized by the spirit of urgency of the moment. A few months after Isfandiyar returned to Tíhrán the National Spiritual Assembly assigned him the task of visiting the believers in the towns and cities of the southern part of Írán to share with them the joyous news of the commencement of the Ten Year Crusade and to stimulate their participation in its prosecution. His wife, Parízád, accompanied him.

Profoundly touched by the call himself, Isfandiyar and his family pioneered to Bursa, Turkey, and later to Recife, Brazil. While in Bursa, in 1962, he and his wife had had the privilege of being invited to accompany the Hand of the Cause of God Tarázu'lláh Samandarí on his three-month tour of Pakistan, India, Ceylon and Burma, a unique opportunity which was joyfully seized and which brought many inspiring experiences.

In 1967 he settled in the United Kingdom where he remained in active service to the Cause until he passed on to the Abhá Kingdom on 18 January 1980. He was buried in the precincts of the blessed resting-place of the beloved of his heart, Shoghi Effendi.

From the time he became a Bahá'í, Isfandiyar Ghobad served with all his strength, even in his later years when he suffered from a heart condition. He is remembered by those who knew him as one steadfast in the Faith, dedicated in its service, forbearing in sufferings, radiant and assured in heart and submissive to the will of God. Precision and order were characteristic of both his private life and his professional practice. His life's achievements were crowned by the cable sent by the Universal House of Justice on 21 January 1980:

SADDENED NEWS PASSING DEVOTED SERVANT CAUSE ISFANDIYAR QUBAD HIS LONG RECORD SERVICES CRADLE FAITH PIONEERING FIELDS ALWAYS REMEMERED. PRAYING HOLY SHRINES PROGRESS HIS SOUL. CONVEY MEMBERS BEREAVED FAMILY LOVING SYMPATHY.
DR. M. FIROOZMAND

MUHAMMAD 'ALÍ-FALLÁH AFNÁN
1888-1980

Mírzá Muhammad 'Alí Afnán was the son of Mírzá Muhammad Báqir Afnán. His mother was the granddaughter of the younger uncle of the Báb, Mírzá Husayn 'Alí, and his father was the grandson of the elder brother of the Báb, Mírzá Siyyid Muhammad.

He was born in Yazd, Írán, in the year 1888, on the very day that seven Bahá'ís of that city were martyred. His father died when he was young and he was brought up by his grandfather, Mírzá Muhammad Taqí Vakflu-Dawlah, the builder of the Bahá'í Temple of Ishqábád. With his mother and sister he travelled from Ishqábád to the Holy Land to reach the presence of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, but soon after his arrival in the Holy Land his grandfather passed away and he was sheltered under the loving care of the Master. He was sent by 'Abdu'l-Bahá to the same school in Beirut which was attended by Shoghi Effendi and later on, when the Master sent Shoghi Effendi to England to study,

He also sent the young Afnán to study agriculture there. In some of the letters Shoghi Effendi wrote while studying in Oxford he mentions the Afnán whom he occasionally visited in Yorkshire.

After completing his studies, Muhammad 'Alí Afnán returned to the Holy Land only twenty days before 'Abdu'l-Bahá passed away. The Afnán remained in Haifa for six months and then returned to Yazd on the instructions of the beloved Guardian. For many years he was elected as a member of the Local Spiritual Assembly of Yazd and often was privileged to serve as chairman.

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Picture in Upper Left Corner with the Caption: Muhammad 'Alí Falláh Afnán

In 1939 an unfortunate incident occurred. The workman responsible for the heating of the Bahá'í public bath was injured during the course of duty. The enemies of the Faith seized the opportunity of making mischief. The chairman of the Local Spiritual Assembly of Yazd was imprisoned and other members were prosecuted. Fortunately the members were released after a short time. Eleven years later, in a village called Abarqú, soon after a Bahá'í pioneer was sent from Yazd to that village, a woman and her several children were murdered in mysterious circumstances. The enemies of the Bahá'í community attributed this tragic event to the coming of the pioneer to their village. As a result the nine members of the Local Spiritual Assembly of Yazd were sentenced to three years' imprisonment. They were confined to prison first in Yazd, then in Kirmán, and finally in the prison of Tihrán. After his release from prison the Afnán visited the Holy Land and attained the presence of the beloved Guardian who praised the steadfastness of those who had suffered unjust imprisonment. Through their incarceration, he said, these believers had followed in the footsteps of the Báb.

Mr. Afnán passed to the Abhá Kingdom in Tihrán in his eighty-ninth year and was buried in the Bahá'í cemetery of that city.

ABU'L-QÁSIM AFNÁN

INPARAJU CHINNIAH

1932-1980

For more than twenty years Inparaju Chinniah strode the Malaysian Bahá'í scene like a spiritual colossus. He was a valued friend to everyone who knew him and all were drowned in profound sorrow when he passed away suddenly on 5 February 1980. Two days later the following cable was received from the Universal House of Justice, describing his significant service to the Cause both in Malaysia and throughout the region of South-east Asia:

DEEPLY GRIEVED UNTIMELY PASSING DEVOTED COWORKER INPARAJU CHINNIAH. HIS OUTSTANDING UNTIRING SERVICES INSTITUTIONS FAITH BOTH MALAYSIA AND SOUTHEAST ASIA SHED LUSTRE ANNALS CAUSE GOD ENTIRE REGION. PRAYING HOLY THRESHOLD PROGRESS SOUL ABHA KINGDOM. MAY BELOVED FRIENDS MALAYSIA INCREASE FERVOUR SERVITUDE BAHULLAH FOLLOW EXAMPLE DEPARTED FRIEND COMPENSATE HIS LOSS THEIR

MIDST. ASSURE FAMILY FRIENDS SYMPATHY. ADVISE HOLD BEFITTING MEMORIAL MEETINGS.

Inparaju was his actual name but early in life he became known as 'Inbum', meaning 'joy', 'sweet' or 'lovely' in the Tamil language. Born on 9 March 1932 in Malacca, Malaysia, he was the second child of a school-teacher, Mr. J. V. Chinniah, who, like his wife Elizabeth Thyria Ratnam, was of Ceylonese origin. The family had a strong affiliation with the Methodist Church in Malacca.

We know little of Inbum's childhood except that he was a brilliant student and an active sportsman. He was a keen scout and rose to the rank of King's Scout, representing Malaysia at a Jamboree in Australia in 1949. Although he did very well in his Cambridge examination that same year, family circum-

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stances prevented his pursuing his studies further. He started off his working life as a teacher in Malacca High School where his father had served earlier. In time Inbum rose to the post of headmaster of the Masjid Tanah Primary School. When this appointment was made in 1957, he was the youngest person ever to have been made headmaster in the State. At a later time he was appointed headmaster of a Secondary Continuation School in Jasin and, in 1965, headmaster of Sekola Menengah Jasin.

Picture in Lower Left Corner with the Caption: Inparaju Chinniah

By 1954 Malacca had become a hub of Bahá'í activity. Among the many active workers there were school-teachers, one of whom was teaching in Malacca High School. Inbum attended his first Bahá'í fireside — a talk on 'The New World Order' — and often mentioned that if it were not for Mr. Kumara Das he might not have accepted the Faith.

Inbum's marriage in 1960 to the exuberant and radiant Chinese Bahá'í Lily Leong, a fellow teacher at Masjid Tanah Primary School, drew considerable attention in Malacca where interracial marriages were still taboo. Four lovely children were born to them.

Early in his life, despite his quiet nature, Inbum's qualities of leadership emerged and it is not surprising that these characteristics were identified and made use of in his service to the Bahá'í Faith. He served on the National Teaching Committee in Peninsular Malaysia in 1962 and 1963. At the second National Convention of Malaysia in 1965 he was elected to the National Spiritual Assembly, serving as treasurer and later as secretary. He settled in Kuala Lumpur. His home at Setapak became, as it were, a mini-hostel, harbouring numerous students and Bahá'í youth. One youth who stayed with him remarked, 'Inbum had the unique ability to tap the latent potential in each individual ... many were the leaders who were nurtured and trained under his able hands.' During his years as secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly important organizational improvements were effected in the office of that body.

In June 1972 the Hand of the Cause of God Rahmatu'lláh Muhájir visited Malaysia and while there encouraged Inbum to go to Africa as a travelling

teacher. Inbum spent six months in Tanzania on leave without salary and made a valuable contribution to the work of the Faith there. A Malaysian travelling teacher who was in Tanzania in 1977 when Inbum was appointed to the Board of Counsellors for South-east Asia witnessed the great joy experienced by the African friends when they learned of his appointment. He had served ably as a member of the Auxiliary Board for protection since 1972 and now he threw himself wholeheartedly into his role as Counsellor, on one occasion travelling the distance of a thousand miles by bus in order to attend a meeting in Bangkok. He was a living example of forgiveness, patience and consideration; he saw the good in every individual and never spoke ill of anyone. He had a genuine humility and the gift of extending a tender and personal attention to those who needed his assistance. His ready wit lightened all hearts.

A sense of urgency was noted in the last few months of his life. He often mentioned that he looked forward to early retirement in order to devote even more time to the Faith. In December 1979 when news was received of the untimely death of the Hand of the Cause Rahmatu'lláh Muhájir, although Inbum could be seen consoling the Bahá'ís all across the country, it was obvious that no one was more

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heartbroken than himself; it was as though a lieutenant had lost his most admired general. Thirty-five days later the lieutenant was to join his loved commander in the Abhá Kingdom.

Inbum often jokingly remarked to his wife, 'I may be poor in wealth, but I am rich in friends!' The large gathering of mourners who came from all parts of the country to attend his funeral, and the torrent of telegrams and telephone calls that were received from all parts of the world, testify to what a rare friend he was. His INSPIRED SERVICES WERE TREASURES TO SOUTHEAST ASIA, the International Teaching Centre cabled at the time of his passing. Later, on 14 February, that institution wrote to members of the Continental Boards of Counsellors throughout the world: 'The loss of this devoted servant of the Faith is indeed great because of his knowledge, wide experience, high efficiency and constancy, all sweetened by an unassuming and natural humility.'

(Adapted from Malaysian Bahá'í Bulletin)

ROSEMARY SALA

1902-1980

EXTEND LOVING SYMPATHY PASSING YOUR BELOVED COMPANION AFTER LONG YEARS UNITED SERVICE FAITH. HAVE SENT FOLLOWING CABLE NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY CANADA QUOTE EXPRESS OUR PROFOUND SORROW PASSING ROSEMARY SALA DEDICATED VETERAN SERVANT BAHAUULLAH PIONEER TEACHING FIELDS AFRICA AMERICAS MEMBER FIRST NATION ASSEMBLY CANADA TIRELESS EFFECTIVE DEVOTED BAHAI TEACHER THROUGHOUT LONG BAHAI LIFE. ASSURE PRAYERS HOLIEST SHRINES PROGRESS HER SOUL WORLDS GOD UNQUOTE
Universal House of Justice, 26 February 1980

Picture in Upper Right Corner with the Caption: Rosemary Sala

When we returned to Canada in 1968, after fourteen years of pioneering in South Africa, we felt we had not done much for the Faith in those long years. In fact, we believed that any imprint we might have made would soon be blown over by the sands of time and be forgotten. After Rosemary winged away on 20 February 1980 in Guadalajara, Mexico, due to cerebral thrombosis, I was flooded with messages from our former pioneer post.

The Evening Post of Port Elizabeth, South Africa, under the headline 'Service for Former P.E. School Library Pioneer', published the following item, together with a picture of Rosemary, in its issue of 18 March 1980:

'A memorial service for a former Port Elizabeth woman, Mrs. Rosemary Sala, who pioneered school libraries in black schools, was held in New Brighton at the weekend. The service was held at the Cowan High School, New Brighton.

'Mr. Frank Tonjeni, principal of Cowan High School, said Mrs. Sala was interested in black education while she lived in South Africa. "She was a very energetic woman and established libraries in all our secondary and high schools."

'Mrs. Sala also established a Sala Prize at three of the schools for leadership and scholastic achievement. "Above the door of our school library there is a plaque bearing her name," Mr. Tonjeni said.

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'Her permit to enter New Brighton was withdrawn in May, 1967.'

Because of the Apartheid laws, social contact in South Africa was very difficult. Rosemary succeeded in obtaining from the authorities permission to enter black townships, where she established libraries in eleven schools, placed over 10,000 books, and brought enjoyment to thousands of students. She did this for ten years, her permit being renewed from year to year. Later it was restricted, and finally it was withdrawn.

Bahá'í News, South and West Africa, states in its February 1980 issue:

'She is known in all the schools of New Brighton, Kwa Zakele and Zwide, and will live in our midst for ages as the mother of the Bahá'ís of New Brighton. Many times have I heard her say: "I have said the Greatest Name all over New Brighton and Kwa Zakele." ... I will always remember her as the kindly lady who was never frightened — even of waiting for the local bus to take her into town ... She was unceasing in her efforts to attract all levels of society to the Faith ... I, for one, will never rest until I have done all the things she herself would have done for the Bahá'ís in the townships of Port Elizabeth.'

There were many more similar eulogies.

Rosemary was born Mary Scott Gillies in Glasgow, Scotland, on 4 May 1902 to Captain and Mrs. Malcolm N. Gillies. When she was four her family brought her to Montreal, Quebec, where she was raised in a strict Presbyterian home. She wanted to become an architect, but the only faculty that would then accept

women students was in New York City, and her mother would not allow her to move. She, therefore, had to be satisfied with graduating from Macdonald Teachers' College, near Montreal.

In December 1927, in Montreal, three young Bahá'ís — Rowland Estall, George F. Spendlove¹ and myself — started the first organized Bahá'í youth group of North America. Within months a few young people were attracted, among whom was a teacher who taught in the same school as Rosemary. She invited Rosemary who came out of curiosity. The following summer Rosemary was invited to the Bahá'í school in Green Acre where she was deeply influenced by the renowned teacher, Mrs. Elizabeth Greenleaf.² That autumn Rosemary declared her faith in Bahá'u'lláh. Since we had three 'Mary's' in our youth group, George Spendlove gave Mary Gillies the name Rosemary which remained with her all her life. She was soon elected youth delegate to the National Convention in Wilmette and was active in various national activities with the result that long after our marriage which took place in 1934 I was known only as 'the husband of Rosemary Gillies'. During the past forty years we have attended many conventions, conferences, summer and winter schools, and on almost every occasion — even as recently as a year ago — I have seen young Bahá'ís with eager eyes, who have read her article 'Marriage in the Bahá'í Faith',³ corner her and become involved in deep discussion. Rosemary often said that because of that article she seems to have been used, all these years, as an unofficial Bahá'í marriage counsellor.

Rosemary and I worked together as one breath and I beg forgiveness if, in attempting to describe her services, I enumerate my own. In August 1938, while in Green Acre, we tried to induce a couple to pioneer in Latin America under the first Seven Year Plan. By the time we reached our home in St. Lambert, Quebec, we realized that while trying to inspire others we had talked ourselves into going. After six months of intensive preparation and an immersion course in Spanish, we set sail the following spring for Caracas, Venezuela, where we stayed for a year.⁴ We found the experience so joyful and thrilling that the desire to pioneer remained with us for the rest of our lives. On our return journey to Canada we drove sixteen hours a day for eight days on a primitive, tortuous mountain road from Caracas to Bogotá, Colombia. Since we were the first Bahá'ís to make that trip, Rosemary invoked the Greatest Name in every valley and hamlet. We returned to Caracas in 1946 during the course of a four-month lecture tour which took us to every country in Latin America except Paraguay. One of the highlights for us was our visit, in Buenos Aires, to the resting-place of Mrs.

1 See 'In Memoriam', The Bahá'í World, vol. XIII, p. 895.

2 See 'In Memoriam', The Bahá'í World, vol. IX, p. 608.

3 The Bahá'í World, vol. VII, p. 761.

4 The Bahá'í Centenary: 1844-1944, p. 197.

May Maxwell where we offered prayers. In 1947 we were back in Venezuela, this time during the course of a Caribbean teaching tour.

In Canada we were instrumental in the creation of the first summer conferences and the Laurentian Bahá'í School; and, as members of the Canadian National Teaching Committee, we helped to prepare the Canadian community for the election, in 1948, of its first National Spiritual Assembly on which we served for the following six years.¹

In 1952 Rosemary went on her first pilgrimage to Haifa as a guest of the Guardian. Her second visit to the Holy Land was in 1968 as a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of South and West Africa.

With the announcement of the Ten Year Crusade we volunteered to pioneer. The Guardian suggested Comoro Islands in the Indian Ocean, but since a visa was refused he gave us Zululand as a second choice. We arrived in May 1954 and settled on a trading post in a native reserve, with no telephone or electricity. We were two hours' distance from the nearest doctor or police station. To our great disappointment, after one year our permit was not renewed. We moved to Port Elizabeth, in the Eastern Cape of South Africa, where we lived for thirteen years. We had to return to Canada for three years — which was a culture shock in reverse — and were happy to pioneer again, in 1971, this time to Guadalajara, Mexico. Previous to this, however, we made a tour of the Far East. We travelled all over Mexico, attended the Merida Conference and made two side trips to Panama. Rosemary spent many weeks preparing illustrated albums about historical events related to the Faith which are on display at the Bahá'í Shrine in Montreal.

Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánúm wrote this about Rosemary: 'She was a remarkable woman, a very sweet one, and her devotion to the Faith was truly exemplary. It never flagged but went on year after year to the very last breath. May we all die as she did, with the good pleasure of Bahá'u'lláh. She was also a devoted friend and a loyal one, and I shall miss very much receiving her letters ... Rosemary will certainly go down as one of Canada's outstanding Bahá'ís as the Canadian community emerged and grew in stature and strength.'

The Hand of the Cause John Robarts and his wife, Audrey, life-long friends, chose for Rosemary the following from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá: O ye handmaid of the merciful Lord! How many queens of this world laid down their heads on a pillow of dust and disappeared. No fruit was left of them, no trace, no sign, not even their names ... Not so the handmaids who ministered at the Threshold of God; these have shone forth like glittering stars in the skies of ancient glory, shedding their splendours across all the reaches of time.²

EMERIC SALA

ROBERT HAYDEN

1913-1980

Robert Earl Hayden was born in Detroit, Michigan, U.S.A., on 4 August 1913 of poor, uneducated parents. At birth he was named Asa Bundy Sheffey, 'Asa' being

his father's name and 'Bundy' the name of the family doctor who had attended his birth. After the separation and divorce of his parents while he was still an infant, his mother put him in the care of friends, William and Sue Ellen Hayden, while she set about finding work to provide for him. A job was found in Buffalo, New York, and she moved there, visiting Robert and the Haydens occasionally. The Haydens did not like the name 'Asa' for the boy and, hoping that they would be permitted to adopt him as their own, renamed him 'Robert Earl'. His mother did not object to this, especially since she felt that the child had a good home while she was working.

It was during his pre-school years that it was discovered how little sight he had. Nevertheless, he was provided with glasses and eagerly learned to read before entering school. During his elementary school years he read a dictionary, an encyclopedia and any other available material, although he was placed in the sight-saving class. When Robert entered school he

1 Shoghi Effendi in *Messages to Canada*, pp. 45, 74.

2 Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, p. 23.

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Picture in Upper Left Corner with the Caption: Robert Hayden

was registered as Robert Earl Hayden. Not until his fortieth year did he come to know that this was not his legal name. Only in 1978 was it made legal.

All his basic education was received in Detroit. Since there was no money for college when he finished high school, he gave up hope of acquiring a higher education. However, the social worker who served his family interceded because of the obvious capabilities of the young man and enabled him to receive a four-year scholarship to Detroit City College, now known as Wayne State University. In the summer of 1938, four years after completing his college work, he entered the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor for advanced study. It was there that he entered a competition for a Hopwood Award, and that summer won a minor award for poetry.

In 1940 he married Erma Inez Morris. The following year they moved to Ann Arbor where Robert began graduate work in earnest and also took advantage of the opportunity to study with W. H. Auden, who at that time was visiting poet at the University of Michigan. In 1940 Robert Hayden's first book of poetry *Heart-Shape in the Dust* was published by a small press in Detroit.

A daughter, Maia, was born in 1942, and that same year Robert won a major Hopwood Award for Poetry. He received a Master of Arts degree in English in 1944 and that fall was appointed Teaching Fellow in English. He held that position for two years, the first black person to have been given that opportunity at the university.

In 1946 Robert and his family moved to Nashville, Tennessee, where he taught at Fisk University for twenty-two years. Meanwhile, he continued to write poetry, his first love. He could not find a publisher, but from time to time his poems

would appear in magazines, including *Atlantic Monthly* and *Poetry*. In 1962 *Ballad of Remembrance* was published in England. Then, between 1966 and 1978, New York publishers and others brought out *Selected Poems*, *Words in the Mourning Time*, *Angle of Ascent*, *Night-Blooming Cereus* and *American Journal*. These accomplishments led eventually to other recognition: the reception of the Grand Prize for Poetry at the first World Festival of the Arts in Dakar, Senegal, 1965; the Russell Loines Award for poetry, National Institute of Arts and Letters, 1970; election by the Academy of American Poets as its 1975 Fellow; membership in the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters; and appointment (1976-1978) to the post of Consultant in Poetry to the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. — these are a few of the many honours given him. In the last-named post he was enabled to bring the Bahá'í teachings to the attention of the manager of the Senate Chambers and some other government officials. On 3 January 1980 he was invited to the White House to read, along with other poets, and was received with genuine warmth by President and Mrs. Carter.

Robert was not a joiner and past experience had made him wary of institutional religion. However, the Hand of the Cause Dorothy Baker, through the instrumentality of Katherine Mills of Ann Arbor, had convinced him of the truth of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh and he joined the Faith in 1943. During his Bahá'í life he served on the Local Spiritual Assemblies of Nashville, Tennessee, and, while he held the consultantship at the Library of Congress, of

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Falls Church, Virginia. He also spoke about the Faith many times on television and radio.

Robert was often asked to give talks on the Faith. After a few such addresses he steadfastly refused these requests, firmly convinced that he could serve the Cause better as a poet. In this role he always strove for excellence. He received many requests to give readings of his poetry and always complied if it was at all possible. Readings took him to many places in the United States. At these presentations he usually read poems he had written containing direct reference to the Faith as well as those on other subjects. He prefaced the readings with explanatory information about the Bahá'í Revelation. Most of all, however, wherever he went he was recognized by all who met him as one who promoted a universal point of view as found in the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh: whether in the classroom, on the lecture platform, or in social gatherings, this was the only view he held valid. In his work this also was true. In a letter written to an inquirer in December 1970 he had this to say: 'I think of the writing of poems as one way of coming to grips with inner and outer realities — as a spiritual act, really, a sort of prayer for illumination and perfection. The Bahá'í Faith, with its emphasis on the essential oneness of mankind and its vision of world unity, is an increasingly powerful influence on my poetry today — and the only one to which I willingly submit.'

From 1968 until his death Robert Hayden was an associate editor of *World Order*,

a Bahá'í periodical published under the aegis of the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States. He made constant efforts to raise the standard of the poetry used in the publication. World Order was very close to his heart, and he thought of his work for it as a real service he could render the Faith.

On 28 February 1980 the Universal House of Justice cabled:

GRIEVED PASSING ESTEEMED SERVANT CAUSE ROBERT HAYDEN. HIS NUMEROUS HONOURS AND DISTINGUISHED CONTRIBUTION POETRY AMERICA ADDS LUSTRE ANNALS FAITH. KINDLY CONVEY TO FAMILY LOVING SYMPATHY ASSURANCE PRAYERS PROGRESS HIS SOUL.
ERMA HAYDEN

ANGELINE GIACHERY

?-1980

Angeline Giachery, whose pure and angelic spirit returned to God on 23 April 1980, was born in Sweden towards the end of the nineteenth century. The solemn beauty of her native land, bejeweled by thousands of rivers and lakes, and dotted with serenely tranquil and majestic forests, impressed itself upon her gentle spirit and found reflection in her stainless character. Highly sensitive to the divine intelligence and exquisite harmony that rule the universe, she found perfection in all created things. The inner happiness which suffused her being was crowned by her peerless love for the Creator. Her childhood and adolescence were richly blessed and congenial. As a small child she studied music passionately and became an accomplished violinist. She was educated in Sweden and England and was a diligent student who took delight in her studies. She enjoyed the rational sciences — particularly mathematics — liberal arts, literature and the poetry of both countries. Travels

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in Europe and abroad completed her education and widened her perspective, preparing her to make what she would later recognize as the supreme choice of her life. In the early 1920s she was introduced to the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh while visiting friends in Boston, U.S.A. Her conversion was immediate, sincere and total: she dedicated the rest of her life to ardent service to the Cause of God and to bringing happiness to her fellow man. A short time later I met Angeline in the home of mutual friends; she was gentle, gracious, cultured, elegant and happy. In her presence one seemed to sense the fragrance of the pines and firs of the Varmland forest, the most romantic and beautiful region of Sweden. We met frequently and a mutual affection developed. On 24 February 1926 we were married in New York City.

Now a considerable part of her time was spent in the company of early believers, many of whom had been in the presence of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Her heart was filled with joy and wonder. She gathered accurate notes and treasured the early translations of Sacred Writings that loving friends gave her. Her knowledge of the Teachings became greater day by day. She attended meetings, lectures and classes and formed deep and lasting friendships with her fellow Bahá'ís. The early writings of the Guardian which were then becoming

available enkindled her with new hope and inspiration. Her home was opened to seekers, firesides were maintained, and her melodious eloquence conquered many hearts. Increasingly immersing herself in the writings of Shoghi Effendi she preoccupied herself with the questions: How to serve the Cause more fully? How to multiply my efforts? She arranged music recitals to attract outstanding and influential people and her efforts were most successful. Trips in America and Europe gave her the opportunity to spread the teachings — seeds which were never lost — but as time went on the desire to pioneer in Europe or in Latin America was uppermost in her mind. At the end of World War II she was able to leave for Rome, a city she had visited in her youth; she rejoiced at the thought of being closer to the Holy Land and to the Guardian whom she greatly revered and honoured with all her heart. Reaching Naples on 20 February 1947 she was distressed by the misery and destruction which were to be seen everywhere, and by the spectacle of countless cold and hungry children. After a twelve-hour journey on an ancient and overcrowded bus she reached the Eternal City. A cabled message from the Guardian — SUPPLICATING ABUNDANT BLESSINGS NOBLE MISSION — brought great cheer.

Despite the difficulties life in war-torn Italy presented Angeline was able to establish herself, and by the end of March the first Italian believer was enrolled in Genoa. A cable from the Guardian arrived on the thirty-first expressing HEARTFELT CONGRATULATIONS and urging ALL OTHER PIONEERS EMULATE NOBLE EXAMPLE. It was signed, LOVING APPRECIATION, SHOGHI. The events of the years and months that followed were recorded by Angeline in her diaries in which she poured out her supplications to God for greater assistance, her humble gratitude for His bounties and her happiness. She looked up old friends; volunteered her services to an association that provided assistance to orphans and displaced persons; made contact with cultural groups, literary figures, art circles, embassies and the Dante Alighieri Society — always winning, with her gracious manner, new friends and interest in the Cause.

By Ridván 1947, the anniversary of the foundation of Rome, electric lights came back in the streets; by Ridván 1948 the first Local Spiritual Assembly of Rome was elected. Shoghi Effendi was overjoyed. He requested a photograph of the Local Spiritual Assembly, had it framed and personally placed it at the head of his bed in the room he often occupied when staying overnight in the Mansion of Bahjí.

The need for Bahá'í literature became evident. Angeline happily initiated a new activity, producing an introductory pamphlet in Italian which was sent to prominent citizens and to four hundred public libraries. This was followed by a new edition of Dr. Esslemont's Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era, a special copy of which, bound in tooled green leather, was sent to the Guardian, who placed this, too, in his room at Bahjí. Until 1964 when she returned to America, she served as chairman of the Italian Publishing Committee, a field which gave scope to her artistic and administrative skills. Under her direction and guidance

many of the major Writings of the Faith were translated into Italian and published in attractive editions.

As the Faith became known throughout the entire Italian peninsula the Bahá'í community grew and new centres were established on the mainland and the offshore islands. Angeline became increasingly involved with travelling, teaching and encouraging the friends. Following the appointment by the Guardian of the Hands of the Cause of God,¹ and the creation of the Auxiliary Boards, she was appointed to the Auxiliary Board for the propagation of the Faith in Europe, serving in that capacity from Ridván 1954 until her return to America in 1964. Her arena of service included not only Italy but Corsica, Malta, Rhodes, Greece, Monaco and Switzerland. The great tests of that period, including the passing of the beloved Guardian, challenged her capacity as she moved from one community to another, exhorting the friends to unity and faithfulness to the Covenant. Her tact, the immaculacy of her mind, and her strong awareness of divine assistance enabled her to maintain the integrity of the administrative order and inspire greater efforts among the believers, resulting in a considerable increase in their numbers.

Her assistance at the Italian end of the magnificent enterprise of securing materials for the construction of the superstructure of the Shrine of the Báb is inestimable, calling as it did for infinite patience, time and attention to detail, and extending from 1948 to the end of 1957.

Early in 1964 she began the painful task of detaching herself from the many friends she had made in Italy over the course of seventeen years; it was agonizing to leave all those she had guided into the Faith and with whom she had worked to build up sixteen Local Spiritual Assemblies. Upon settling in La Jolla, California, intensive teaching activities were undertaken, including several firesides a week and travels that took her through Arizona, Oregon, Washington and as far north as the Yukon Territory of Canada where, north of Whitehorse, a large cabin capable of holding forty students at a Bahá'í school bears her name. Crossing to Alaska she captivated the affection of the Indians; here the elders of a venerable clan, during a jubilant official ceremony, invested her with the title Princess of Tlingit Eagle Tribe — their escutcheon represents a flying eagle. She formulated at this time a plan to unite in the Faith all the people of the Arctic territories, from Finland to Alaska. At the Intercontinental Conference in Helsinki in 1976 the plan again received some consideration. After the conference she travelled to the Arctic region of Finland and on her return journey met with a serious accident which started her physical decline. Undaunted, however, she travelled to Sweden and to the Arctic region of Norway, and the following year returned to the Arctic regions of Finland and Sweden.

When she had taken her leave from the beloved Guardian on 23 December 1954 he had said that she would return to the Holy Land after the Archives building was completed but that in the meantime he wished her to travel and see the friends. Angeline promised herself that from then on she would wholly dedicate herself to travelling and teaching. In the years that followed she visited countless

centres on five continents participating in every type of activity that circumstances demanded of her from simple fireside talks to the presentation of the book *The Proclamation of Bahá'u'lláh* to Pope Pius XII, to His Highness Malietoa Tamumafili II and to Umberto II of Italy.

She grew frail in the last months of her life and sorrowed that she could no longer travel. Her end came suddenly, but until the very last moment the name of God was on her beautiful, smiling lips. Her mortal remains are now gathered in a befitting sepulchre in Cap d'Ail Cemetery, near Monaco, facing the blue Mediterranean Sea she was so fond of. May present and future generations keep alive the memory of this true lover of God, and maidservant of Bahá'u'lláh.

Her inconsolable UGO

CECILIA MKIZE NODADA

1917-1980

Cecilia Mkize Nodada, whose nickname 'Zimbili' means 'two' in her native Zulu tongue, was born on 21 November 1917 in Inanda, a

1 Editor's note: Dr. Ugo Giachery was appointed a Hand of the Cause on 24 December 1951.

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Picture in Upper Right Corner with the Caption: Cecilia Mkize Nodada

village near Durban, South Africa. She studied nursing and worked in this profession for thirty-eight years. She was considered an exemplary nurse by her professional colleagues. In 1949 she married Baptin Nodada, a Xhosa, and they had eight children, four of whom later became Bahá'ís. Cecilia and her husband constantly stressed the importance of education to the youth and, giving concrete form to their thought, they helped to pay the college fees of two young men who were distant relatives.

nbsp; Cecilia was introduced to the Bahá'í Faith through her father's sister, Bertha Mkize, who presented her with a copy of *The New Garden*; and Ruth Kubone, a member of the Auxiliary Board, also came to Umtata, Transkei, to further her knowledge of the teachings. She finally signed her declaration card in Umtata on 23 August 1966, her aunt countersigning it as her teacher. At first Cecilia's heavy responsibilities as a nurse prevented her from being very active in Bahá'í community life. She was also, in her own words, 'one of those sleepy Bahá'ís who need deepening in order to become fully aware of the significance of the Faith'. This desirable deepening came in about 1974 as the result of a visit to Transkei of two distinguished African teachers, Robert Mazibuko and Joyce Dwashu. As a result, Cecilia became enkindled with love for the Faith. She visited and deepened some of the friends in Northern Transkei, especially those near the village where she lived after retirement. She was fluent in Zulu, Xhosa and English, and was fond of both reading and writing. She loved to teach but, unfortunately, she became ill when she did much travelling or walking. This was probably an early sign of the cancer that would

later develop.

She greatly enjoyed teaching children's classes — employing songs and plays — and strongly encouraged others to establish classes and showed them what to do. She tried very hard, especially by example, to demonstrate to the friends in the rural areas how they could produce goods that could be later sold for cash to give to the Bahá'í Fund. For instance, she grew beans and offered them for sale at the National Convention. She encouraged the friends to use their money to go out and teach others about the Faith; at times she would also pay the bus fares of friends who wished to make local teaching trips.

Cecilia was deeply loved by the friends in Transkei because of her warm and loving spirit. She was a quiet, modest and affectionate soul who was always surprising people with little gifts and presents. When she was not knitting for the Fund she was knitting special little gifts for the believers — right up to the last few weeks of her life. When friends forgot to write reports for the national committees, or hesitated to do so because of their poor skill in English, Cecilia would generously offer to do it for them. The friends felt that they had in Cecilia a kind friend who was concerned for their welfare and happiness and who loved them.

In 1976 the National Spiritual Assembly of South and West Africa appointed her to the National Teaching Committee. She served on this body, even though it required her making long trips to Johannesburg, until, in 1977, she was appointed a member of the Auxiliary Board for Propagation. However, just two years later she became very ill with cancer against which she battled valiantly for more than two years; to the limit of her strength she

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was active right up to the last few months of her life. Her absence from the first national convention of Transkei was so deeply felt that Counsellor William Masehla paid her a visit, hoping to transport her in a car. This was not possible because of the advanced stage of her illness; it was apparent that she had only a few weeks of earthly life left. One of her Bahá'í daughters remarked that throughout her illness Cecilia took comfort from the Bahá'í song Angene Ndibuyele Umva whose lyric attests 'I'll never turn back from being a Bahá'í'. Finally, less than two weeks after the election of the first National Spiritual Assembly of Transkei, on 12 May 1980, in Dangwane village, our dear Cecilia followed the Messenger of Joy and departed for the next world. The news of her passing saddened the whole Bahá'í community of this region, especially Transkei and its newly-formed National Spiritual Assembly, all of whose members attended her funeral on 16 May. There were hundreds of people present on that day. A bus-load of nurses in uniform attended, some of whom composed a guard of honour during the funeral while others made short addresses about her excellent work as a nurse. Two Christian ministers were present, both of whom offered prayers and praised her character. Even in death Cecilia Nodada, the first Bahá'í of Northern Transkei, was teaching; even two years after her funeral people who were present on that occasion are enquiring about

the Faith she had espoused. Her life was an enactment of her favourite song,
Angene Ndibuyele Umva.

nbsp; On 13 May the Universal House of Justice cabled:

GRIEVED LEARN PASSING CECILIA NODADA KINDLY EXPRESS OUR LOVING SYMPATHY FAMILY
FRIENDS. OFFERING PRAYERS SACRED SHRINES PROGRESS HER SOUL ABHA KINGDOM.
NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF TRANSKEI

JEANNETTE OUTHEY

?-1980

The National Spiritual Assembly of New Caledonia and the Loyalty Islands on 21
May 1980 cabled to the Universal House of Justice: WITH DEEP SORROW ANNOUNCE
PASSING MADAME OUTHEY FIRST BELIEVER TERRITORIES ON 20 MAY ...

Having learned of the Bahá'í Faith through Mariette Bolton¹ of Australia, Jeannette Outhey — thought to be the first Caledonian believer — declared her faith in Thio, New Caledonia, on 10 June 1961. She became a great friend of the untiring Australian pioneer, Margaret Rowling, who found the first Melanesian believers in that French-speaking territory. Jeannette took part actively in 1961 in the election of the first Local Spiritual Assembly of Noumea and served on that body for nineteen consecutive years. Such was her enthusiasm that she even wanted to participate in the election of officers two weeks before her passing, although she was suffering painfully from an incurable disease. In 1971, when the seat of the National Spiritual Assembly of the South West Pacific Ocean was transferred from Honiara in the Solomon Islands to Noumea, Jeannette was elected to the National Spiritual Assembly which was composed of believers from New Hebrides, New Caledonia and Loyalty Islands. Re-elected in 1972, she was able to make the trip of her life by going to the Holy Land the following year to attend the third Bahá'í International Convention. On the return journey she was also able to visit the resting-place of Shoghi Effendi before resuming her duties in New Caledonia. When her mother, the senior Bahá'í of the Territories, passed away four years later, Jeannette became free to accept the position of custodian of the National Hazíratu'l-Quds in Noumea, a sensitive function which she discharged with zeal, competence and love until her last days. She made of this blessed spot a fragrant garden where local believers and transient guests enjoyed the generosity of her services, the affability of her character and her unequalled hospitality.

After having served the Cause of God for twenty years with love, devotion and perseverance, and having proclaimed its ideals to people of all backgrounds and races, both in the Loyalty Islands and New Caledonia, and even in Europe, Australia and New Zealand, Jeannette Outhey left this world under physical suffering but with mental

¹ See 'In Memoriam', The Bahá'í World, vol. XV, p. 435.

Picture in Upper Left Corner with the Caption: Jeannette Outhey

serenity. On 21 May almost all members of the Bahá'í community of New Caledonia gathered at her grave to pay public tribute to her in the presence of her sorrowing family and friends. The memory of this great figure of the Faith in New Caledonia will for a long time remain engraved in the hearts of all those who had the joy of knowing her. May the Abhá Kingdom, where she has taken flight, offer her unrestricted happiness.

THE NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF NEW
CALEDONIA AND THE LOYALTY ISLANDS

KAMIL ABBAS

(KÁMIL 'ABBÁS RIDÁ)

1911-1980

Knight of Bahá'u'lláh

From his youth my late father took the service of the Bahá'í Cause as his principal aim. After completing his primary and secondary studies he began his Bahá'í service as a member of the youth committee of Baghdád. He began to study Persian, English and German and eventually excelled in these languages. He corresponded a number of times with the Guardian. While still a young man he became a member of the Local Spiritual Assembly of Baghdád and then was elected to the National Spiritual Assembly of 'Iráq.

In 1953 at the beginning of the Ten Year Plan he arose as a pioneer to the Seychelles Islands in the Indian Ocean for which he was named a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh by Shoghi Effendi.¹ He remained there for approximately three months until forced to return to 'Iráq due to his inability to obtain a residence permit.

In 'Iráq he steadfastly served the Cause. He was sent on a number of missions to neighbouring Arab states at the instructions of the beloved Guardian, especially to Lebanon to which he travelled several times. He represented the National Spiritual Assembly of 'Iráq at a number of Bahá'í Intercontinental Conferences and he likewise represented the Cause at several non-political conferences sponsored by the United Nations. Within the Bahá'í community he was a patient and

Picture in Lower Right Corner with the Caption: Kamil Abbas

¹ See Shoghi Effendi, Messages to the Bahá'í World, p. 52.

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exemplary believer, courageously defending the Faith, diffusing its wisdom among the friends, and respected and honoured by them. In 1957 he was appointed to the Auxiliary Board for the protection of the Cause. On a number of occasions his Bahá'í service took him to India and Pakistan and in 1966 he spent some time in Írán. He assisted Mr. Muhammad Husayn Rawhání¹ in the delicate task of transferring the remains of the father of Bahá'u'lláh,

Mírzá Buzurg, to a Bahá'í cemetery.² He also carried out, upon the instructions of Shoghi Effendi, various assignments relating to historic Bahá'í sites in Baghdád . For nearly twenty years he served as secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly of 'Iráq.

After his return from Tihrán in 1967 he remained in Baghdád due to the difficulty of travelling abroad. It was the will of God that he be one of the faithful friends who were arrested in December 1973 and sentenced to life imprisonment. He was so firm and steadfast in the Cause of the Blessed Beauty that the prison authorities watched my father carefully. At times they oppressed him and at times tried to persuade him to recant, but without avail. My father's course was to be firm in the service of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, to cling to His ordinances, and to proffer obedience and fidelity to the Universal House of Justice. A few months after he left the prison his health weakened, and on 5 June 1980 his spirit ascended to the Abhá Kingdom. It was my father's wish during the last years of his life to write a book on the blessed Cause and we may be certain that only his imprisonment prevented him from carrying out his intention. He ascended from this transitory life firm in the truth of God's mighty Cause.

Informed of my father's passing, the Universal House of Justice cabled on 15 June 1970 [sic]:

DEEPLY GRIEVED PASSING KNIGHT BAHULLAH STAUNCH STEADFAST PROMOTER FAITH ABL
DEFENDER COVENANT KAMIL ABBAS WHOSE MANIFOLD SERVICES PIONEERING TEACHING
FIELDS LOVINGLY REMEMBERED. PRAYING HOLY SHRINES PROGRESS HIS NOBLE SOUL.
CONVEY MEMBERS FAMILY LOVING SYMPATHY.
DR. B. K. ABBAS

(Translated from the Arabic by JOHN WALBRIDGE)

CECILIA KING BLAKE
1911-1980

Picture in Middle Right of Page with the Caption: Cecilia King Blake

On 25 February 1911 a privileged soul, Cecilia King Blake, came into the world. She embraced the Bahá'í Faith on 20 October 1957 in Panama and almost immediately arose to serve as a pioneer in the Chitr³ zone where she gave her services with great dedication and efficiency. In the closing years of the Ten Year Crusade there was an urgent appeal for pioneers to Nicaragua. In the period between May 1960 and April 1961 a contingent of pioneers arrived, including Cecilia. She had been on the front lines in the teaching field for more than a decade in Panama and on several occasions served as a member of the National Spiritual Assembly.

1 See 'In Memoriam', The Bahá'í World, vol. XIV, p. 373.

2 See Shoghi Effendi, Messages to the Bahá'í World, p. 175; also The Bahá'í World, vol. XIII, p. 297.

Her activities in Nicaragua were described in the Panama Bahá'í Bulletin of July 1980: 'A Panamanian pioneer of great enthusiasm and joy, she arose to serve at fifty years of age, leaving Panama to offer her valuable services in Nicaragua and help in the formation of the first Local Spiritual Assembly of Bluefields, a very important factor in making possible the simultaneous election, in the memorable year 1961, of all the National Spiritual Assemblies of Latin America. From the moment she arrived at her pioneer post, "Miss Cecilia", as she was affectionately called by the local people whose confidence, love and esteem she immediately won, began to work for the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh, opening up every type of activity, including children's classes, literacy classes and firesides. She made long-distance, hazardous teaching trips to inhospitable places all along the Nicaraguan coast, carrying high the banner of the Most Great Name and proclaiming the healing message of the Bahá'í Faith in mountainous and rural areas.'

It is difficult to describe the wonderful work she carried out in the Department of Zelaya, Nicaragua. There she worked expanding the foundation of the Faith, deepening the believers and consolidating communities which were separated, in some instances, by distances of more than a day's journey over rivers, through jungles and along coastal beaches. The task was difficult but her spirit was indomitable in the service of the Cause. By great economic sacrifice she purchased in Rio Escondido a considerable piece of fertile land — a veritable paradise whose silence is broken only by the lapping of the sea waves — and donated it to the National Spiritual Assembly of Nicaragua with the hope that it would in future be the site of a permanent Bahá'í Institute.

In spite of her health, which was weakened by the difficulties of climate and food and her exhausting work among the indigenous people whom she loved dearly, Cecilia was always ready not only to teach the Bahá'í Faith but to defend it, even at the cost of her own life if circumstances should demand it. Her hand was always extended to assist the sick, protect the helpless and share her meagre bread with the hungry. She saw all the indigenous people as her children and at any moment would have given her life for them. Her heart was so large and generous that it almost would not fit in her chest. So exhausting were the conditions under which she laboured that her health broke down under the strain. One day we received her at the airport in Managua in a very serious condition and practically unconscious. It took two months for her to recover from that illness, and as soon as she regained a little strength, in spite of our pleas that she take a rest, she returned to her pioneer post because, she said, her indigenous friends needed her.

During the 1970s Cecilia settled in Costa Rica and continued teaching the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh with the same enthusiasm and dedication as before, in spite of age and broken health. Even from her sick-bed during her last days in this world she continued spreading the divine fragrances.

The Bahá'ís of three countries — Panama, Nicaragua and Costa Rica — grieved at her passing on 27 June 1980, because upon the believers in those lands she had lavished the intense love of her great heart. DEPLORE LOSS OUR

BELOVED SISTER COWORKER CECILIA WHOSE EXTENSIVE SACRIFICES GREATLY AIDED THE FIRM ESTABLISHMENT OF THE FAITH IN THE PACIFIC AND ATLANTIC REGIONS OF NICARAGUA, cabled the friends in Nicaragua. MAY THE BLESSED BEAUTY LOVINGLY PROTECT HER FOREVER.

A consolatory message from the Universal House of Justice was cabled on 1 August 1980:

SADDENED LEARN FROM YOUR BULLETIN PASSING CECILIA KING BLAKE. HER SELFLESS PIONEER SERVICE BOTH AT HOME AND ABROAD ADDS LUSTRE ANNALS FAITH COSTA RICA AND PROVIDES STERLING EXAMPLE HER COUNTRYMEN. PRAYING HOLY THRESHOLD PROGRESS HER SOUL KINGDOMS GOD.

The funeral was held in accordance with Bahá'í laws and was conducted with great dignity. The attendance was very large. Her grave was literally covered with flowers. Cecilia King Blake is in the Abhá Kingdom and from there she sends us her loving and kind smile.

SALOMÉN ESCALANTE E.

(Translated from the Spanish by BARBARA BARRETT)

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Picture in Upper Left Corner with the Caption: John William Allen

JOHN WILLIAM ALLEN

1907-1980

Knight of Bahá'u'lláh

He knew very little of his new home. So when he and his wife Valera arrived at the border of Swaziland in a rented car on 19 April 1954, they had with them full camping provisions; though they never had to use them. They were responding to a letter from Shoghi Effendi urging them to take up residence in a virgin Bahá'í territory before the end of the first year of the Ten Year Crusade. God had granted their wish to join the legions of the Knights of Bahá'u'lláh. At that time they had no way of knowing that Swaziland would be their home for the rest of their lives. Nor could they know that this colonial territory would emerge as an independent nation before John's death on 31 August 1980, with more than 5,000 Bahá'ís; with its own National Spiritual Assembly recognized by the government; with national, regional and local Bahá'í Centres; with the Leroy Ioas Bahá'í Teaching Centre named after John's longtime friend and confidant; and with other endowments.

Behind this spiritual triumph, guided always by Shoghi Effendi with whom the Allens had extensive correspondence and whom they visited while on pilgrimage in 1954, is the life-story of a man with the clear vision that the Cause of God must be the beacon toward which his entire life must be oriented to give it meaning and direction and success.

John Allen was born on 16 May 1907 in Auburn, California. His talent for organization and leadership emerged early. As a teenager he took full responsibility for managing a fruit orchard when his father fell ill. He was an

excellent athlete and played on the football team at the College of the Pacific. He married at the beginning of the great depression and supported his family during those very difficult years through his initiative, imagination and tenacity as an automobile salesman. In 1945 he opened his own automobile dealership which grew and prospered until he left to pioneer to Swaziland.

John's relationship to the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh developed through his marriage. His wife, Valera, had become a Bahá'í in 1925, well before they had even met. A year after their marriage they moved to Sacramento. When the only Bahá'í couple in that town came to call, they simply assumed that John was a Bahá'í and he joined in the teaching activities. In those days there were no enrolment cards.

His business skills in bidding on government surplus at the end of World War II were put to use to serve the Faith. He secured for the Bahá'í faith registration as a charitable organization. Under this registration the Bahá'ís were able to purchase government surplus at more than a ninety per cent discount on bid price. In his capacity as chairman of the Maintenance Committee at the Geyserville Bahá'í School, he equipped the school, from dormitories to kitchen, for almost nothing.

John Allen was a builder both of physical edifices and spiritual communities, and the two came together in his service to the Faith in Southern Africa. He was never happier than on the frequent occasions when he negotiated for a particularly difficult purchase of land, or the permits to build, or was able to lay out a new building. It was even his good fortune to be in Haifa when the Guardian asked the

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Hand of the Cause of God Ugo Giachery to lay out the position of the Archives Building. John helped Dr. Giachery drive the stakes and stretch the strings which marked the location of the first building to arise on the Arc around which will be located the international institutions of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh.

He was a generous man. He helped pioneers settle in Swaziland, obtaining lists of employment opportunities, corresponding with pioneer committees, negotiating for residence permits, jobs, housing, cars, and often inviting newly-arrived pioneers to accept the hospitality of his home. Many times he contributed material support to make it possible for them to remain in Swaziland. He assisted with the education of many young Swazi students, some of whom lived in his own home.

Automobiles were a lifetime preoccupation. As a high school student he built his own 'buggy' from the frame up, selling it to raise funds for college. Cars were designed for use and he did not spare them. In the early days when there were no paved roads in Swaziland he might drive more than an hour one way over very rough roads to collect a Swazi Bahá'í to attend a Nineteen Day Feast or a group of seekers to come to a fireside, repeating the journey when he took

them home the same evening. Years later he wore out two trucks, even as his own health was failing, carting the materials and supervising the construction of two regional Bahá'í Centres, in Hlatikulu and Piggs' Peak, each a two-hour drive. He was appointed to the first Auxiliary Board by the Hand of the Cause Músá Banání with responsibility for Northern and Southern Rhodesia, Nyasaland and Mozambique. Travelling in those countries over difficult roads he would sometimes carry a full set of tyres on the roof-rack to prevent delays. One of his strong points was his ability to anticipate both needs and consequences in the most diverse of circumstances.

As well as assisting in the spiritual development of Swaziland, John sought, with two of his sons, to participate in its economic advancement by rescuing a moribund pineapple industry. A noteworthy achievement was the establishment of a Swazi Farmers' Pineapple Settlement Scheme under which Swazi farmers, for the first time ever, were enabled to purchase and operate their own pineapple farms.

In the early teaching plans of the Guardian, the task of building world order fell to few hands. While in the United States John served on the Geyserville School Committee, the National Youth Committee and the National Teaching Committee. At the beginning of the Ten Year Crusade, when he was a member of the Asian Teaching Committee, he would laugh and say it was the committee's job to send Bahá'í pioneers to countries and islands neither they nor anyone on the committee had ever heard of. Nonetheless, he and his fellow committee members succeeded in turning naive intentions of devoted Bahá'ís into the reality of service. As always, he was a salesman, with the gift of convincing people of their worth and their ability to accomplish things they feared to hope for, and to serve in ways they did not dream to be possible.

And then he came to Swaziland to become an example of what is possible if you have the courage to try and the determination to stay with it. The Faith quickly took root and the early Swazi believers were carefully nourished and deepened. Several members of the Royal Family became Bahá'ís. Soon a Regional National Spiritual Assembly was formed for Southern Africa and he served as a member of that body, and of its daughter National Spiritual Assembly in Swaziland, for many years. Through triumph and heartbreak, John and Valera persisted at their post for more than a quarter-century. The Cause of God continues to grow in Swaziland, nurtured by the efforts at various times of almost a hundred pioneers, but increasingly its destiny must lie in the hands of the local believers taught so carefully and well.

John was the head of a large, active Bahá'í family, in addition to being an example of service to the Bahá'í world. His three sons, and their wives, have all served as Bahá'í pioneers. All eleven of his grandchildren are active in their service to the Faith as pioneers, travelling teachers and members of National and Local Spiritual Assemblies. John lived to see the birth of his first great granddaughter at the pioneering post of her parents in Zimbabwe.

John Allen was a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Swaziland when he

died at Stanford, California, while on a visit to

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celebrate his fiftieth wedding anniversary. It was the bounty of God that his family, gathered from all over the world, were able to share the celebration of fifty years of devoted service to family, profession, and the vision of World Order, before his peaceful ascension. On 1 September 1980 the Universal House of Justice cabled:

HEARTS GRIEVED PASSING KNIGHT BAHULLAH DISTINGUISHED PIONEER PROMOTER FAITH JOHN ALLEN. HIS RADIANCE PERSEVERANCE AUDACITY IN DEVOTED SERVICES FAITH IN NORTH AMERICA AND PARTICULARLY SOUTHERN AFRICA OVER SEVERAL DECADES SET SHINING EXAMPLE SERVANTS CAUSE GOD. ADVISE HOLD MEMORIAL GATHERINGS THROUGHOUT SWAZILAND BEFITTING HIS STATION. PRAYING SHRINES PROGRESS HIS NOBLE SOUL ABHA KINGDOM.

Reporting on the memorial services held throughout Swaziland, the Swaziland Bahá'í News stated: 'The life and sacrifices of dear John Allen will long remain a shining example to all the believers in Swaziland to follow — this Knight of Bahá'u'lláh who brought us God's Message for our time.'

DWIGHT W. ALLEN

SARAH FLORENCE FITZNER

1906-1980

Knight of Bahá'u'lláh

On 19 October 1906 Sarah Florence Parry was born in Wrexham, Wales. Her family emigrated to Australia when she was six years old.

Florence became a teacher in the Education Department of South Australia. In 1927 a fellow-teacher, Miss Bertha Mochan (who later, as Mrs. Bertha Dobbins, became the Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for the New Hebrides) invited her to a meeting in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Hyde-Dunn in North Adelaide. Florence asked her friend, Harold Fitzner,¹ to accompany her, and they became regular attendants at these meetings. The sincerity and love of the couple who became affectionately known in the Australian Bahá'í community as 'Father and Mother Dunn', and the truth and beauty of the Bahá'í Writings, deeply affected Florence and Harold. In 1928 they embraced the Cause.

In 1931 Florence married Harold Fitzner; this was one of the first Bahá'í marriages in Australia. They held firesides in their home regularly and many enquirers who attended subsequently accepted the Faith. Florence was a hard-working teacher of the Bahá'í Faith. Accompanied by her husband she undertook much extension teaching in country towns of South Australia, in addition to serving on the Local Spiritual Assembly of Adelaide, supporting various meetings at the Bahá'í Centre, assisting with children's classes, visiting the sick and elderly and other activities. They attended the Intercontinental Conference in New Delhi in 1953 where, in response to the great call issued by Shoghi Effendi for believers to arise and go to the virgin territories, they offered their services as pioneers to Portuguese Timor. Many

difficulties had to be overcome before they reached their pioneering goal but with much prayer, persistence and dedicated effort Harold arrived in Portuguese Timor in June 1954; Florence joined him four months later. After his arrival he met distrust

Picture in Lower Right Corner with the Caption: Sarah Florence Fitzner

1 See 'In Memoriam', The Bahá'í World, vol. XV, p. 449.

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and opposition from some of the authorities and Florence helped to make life easier for Harold by sharing the problems and the tasks of daily living. Florence and Harold were honoured by the Guardian with the title, Knights of Bahá'u'lláh.¹

In time, opposition was overcome and they were accepted through their lives of loving service. They taught English to many students — Portuguese, Chinese, Timorese, Arabs and others of mixed blood — and created a schoolroom of their new house which was built in Dili. These students, many of whom later went abroad for further study, also learned from the Fitzners about the Bahá'í Faith. The Faith could not be taught openly in Portuguese Timor but, as the years passed, some of the local people embraced it.

Harold's deteriorating health became a cause of great concern for Florence. After a protracted period of illness he died at his post in 1969. Love for the Faith and for the Timorese people prompted Florence to remain serving in Timor and to continue teaching English. In 1973 she was privileged to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. She made occasional visits to Adelaide for dental and medical reasons and it was during one of these visits in 1974 that revolution broke out, making it unwise for her to return to her beloved Timor where she had served for twenty years. She continued teaching the Faith and supporting Bahá'í activities in her own and other areas of Australia, and in 1978 went as a travelling teacher to Tonga, Fiji and both islands of New Zealand. Health problems gradually prevented her from doing all she would have liked to have done in service to the Cause she loved so dearly. Florence passed to the Abhá Kingdom on 7 September 1980. After her passing the following cable was sent by the Universal House of Justice:

SADDENED NEWS PASSING DEVOTED MAIDSERVANT KNIGHT BAHULLAH FLORENCE FITZNER
DEVOTED SERVICES AND THOSE OF HER LATE HUSBAND HAROLD IN ESTABLISHING FAITH
TIMOR LOVINGLY REMEMBERED. CONVEY SYMPATHY FAMILY FRIENDS PRAYING HOLY SHRINE
PROGRESS HER SOUL KINGDOMS GOD.

JAMES CHITTLEBOROUGH

Picture in Upper Right Corner with the Caption: Louis Pierre Henri Dhacoo

LOUIS PIERRE HENRI DHACOO
1930-1980

Pierre Dhacoo was born on 16 February 1930 in Mauritius and was a member of a

devout Christian family whose beliefs he adopted. On 1 March 1961 he accepted the Bahá'í Faith, expressly desiring to declare his acceptance on that day so he could begin his Bahá'í life by observing the Fast. Despite the opposition and disapproval of friends and relatives he served the Faith selflessly and unceasingly from the moment he embraced it. At first his employer expressed concern at his involvement with the Bahá'í community but Pierre's loyalty, integrity and devotion to duty soon caused his employer to change his attitude to one of appreciation and respect.

The nature of Pierre's employment required him to travel extensively during the day but he was never too tired at day's end to undertake teaching trips for the Faith. He discharged any task entrusted to him with a high sense of dedication, performing it to the best of his ability. Many were guests in his home, and many in need or in distress would knock at his door knowing that he would extend any

1 See Shoghi Effendi, *Messages to the Bahá'í World*, p. 69.

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assistance within his power. He was admired for his devotion to his family and for his constant willingness to extend help to those within and without the Bahá'í community. He was even-tempered, humble and courteous, and nothing would dampen his spirit. He had the gift of seeing the humorous aspects of ordinary situations, and the anecdotes he would relate at Unity Feasts and social gatherings lightened all hearts.

He was an enthusiastic teacher, capable of presenting the Glad Tidings in simple and moving language. He served on the Local Spiritual Assembly of Port Louis and on the National Teaching Committee. He was elected to the National Spiritual Assembly in 1968 and was a member of that body until his death. His service on these institutions was rendered in an unassuming and quiet yet dynamic way.

His passing on 5 October 1980 deprived the Mauritian Bahá'í community of one of its most valued servants. He was a dearly loved friend, a faithful co-worker and a true Bahá'í brother. He leaves a wife and five children who have all espoused the Faith. In a letter written on its behalf on 3 November 1980 the Universal House of Justice expressed sorrow at the passing of 'an outstanding believer and devoted servant of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh'.

S. APPA and S. MOOTEN

KARL DONALD STETTLER

1908-1980

Karl Donald Stettler was born in Canton, Ohio, U.S.A., on 17 October 1908 to Roman Catholic parents. A few years later his family moved to San Bernadino, California, where he attended school. While still a young man he was lured north to Alaska where he settled in Cordova and trained as a meteorologist. After completing his training, he travelled to all the weather stations

throughout Alaska as a relief meteorologist.

While stationed at Point Barrow, he first heard about the Bahá'í Faith from a pioneer, Frances Wells.¹ She introduced me to Karl just before she left to pioneer once again, this time to Luxembourg. She suggested that I keep in touch with him and invite him to Bahá'í activities when he was in Anchorage. I discovered while talking with Karl that I had been binding his library collection on Alaska through the local book store. After that he brought his books directly to me. Dutifully, I sent him Bahá'í literature and notices while he manned weather stations out in the tundra. For my birthday, he sent his Bahá'í enrolment card. The next summer we were married.

Picture in Upper Right Corner with the Caption: Karl Donald Stettler

Karl was active on the Local Spiritual Assembly of Spenard and was a popular speaker and chairman for public meetings. He became the executive member of the Alaska National Book Sales Committee. Through him, the book sales were enlarged to include publications from Bahá'í publishers around the world. In 1960 he was elected to the National Spiritual Assembly of Alaska but in the same year the weather bureau sent him to Washington, D.C., for additional training in personnel work.

In 1970 Alaska was requested to send pioneers to Swaziland. Karl, myself and my daughter, Deanne, volunteered for this assignment. We became the first caretakers of the

¹ See 'In Memoriam', The Bahá'í World, vol. XIII, p. 923.

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Leroy Ioas Institute at Mbabane. Karl was constantly working to improve the facilities.

During his pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 1973 Karl learned that George Ronald, Publisher, in England, could use his help. He had long nursed a desire to work at this publishing house for Marion Hofman. We moved to Oxford and lived in an apartment over the company's office. In this position Karl also worked for the Publishing Department of the Universal House of Justice.

In 1979 Karl's health forced him to give up this work to which he had devoted so much love. We returned to the United States and settled in Coos Bay, Oregon.

On 25 May 1979 the Universal House of Justice wrote to Karl, 'On the occasion of your leaving the service of the Department of Publishing we take the opportunity of expressing to you our very warm thanks and commendation for the devoted services which you have rendered over the past few years. We are very happy that you and your dear wife have been able to visit the World Centre before going back to Oregon and we offer you both a very warm welcome. Your pioneering services in Africa are remembered by us and we are sure that wherever you may be you will continue to serve the Cause with steadfast devotion. We will offer prayers for you both at the Sacred Threshold.'

After a year's illness, Karl passed from this life on 7 October 1980. He was the first Bahá'í to be laid to rest in the Sunset Memorial Park in Coos Bay. On 21 October the Universal House of Justice cabled:

OUR LOVING SYMPATHY TO YOU LOSS KARL STEADFAST DEVOTED SERVANT BHAULLAH.

Karl was a generous, loving, hospitable person and was happiest when our home was humming with Bahá'í activity. His quick wit made him many friends wherever he went. We miss you, Karl, but we know you are just as busy helping as before.

LUCILLE STETTLER

Picture in Upper Left Corner with the Caption: Alexe Cookson

ALEXE COOKSON

1918(?) - 1980

GRIEVED LEARN PASSING DEVOTED MAIDSERVANT BHAULLAH ALEXE COOKSON. ASSURE LOVING PRAYERS HOLY SHRINES PROGRESS HER IMMORTAL SOUL KINGDOMS GOD. KINDLY CONVEY SYMPATHY FAMILY FRIENDS.

Universal House of Justice

Alexe Cookson was born on the Isle of Harris, Outer Hebrides, Scotland, about 1918. Completing her education at boarding-school, she trained as a nurse during World War II. In this period she married a New Zealand Air Force pilot. When peace was declared she emigrated to New Zealand with her young son. In 1964 Alexe became a Bahá'í in Wanganui. She tutored the hard of hearing, employment which enabled her to pioneer to the goal areas of New Plymouth and Nelson.

'To enumerate the many contributions Alexe made to the New Zealand community', friends have written, 'would not be as Alexe herself would wish, as she was very self-effacing and humble, and saw herself only as a channel to

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serve the Cause of God; but among these were service on Local Spiritual Assemblies, pioneering, travel-teaching on the homefront and abroad, and service on committees. She was elected to the National Spiritual Assembly for ten years and was its secretary for eight, until her appointment as Auxiliary Board member for protection in 1978.' It was during this time that her fullest and richest service was rendered, based as it was on a depth of knowledge of the principles of Bahá'í administration combined with her natural capacity for winning the confidence of the friends and of tendering them advice and guidance.

In an entry in her diary in 1949 Alexe confided her concern for her children who were born of parents of different races: 'Miscegenation is not an easy thing and sometimes I am hurt to the quick by what people say and sometimes I wonder "What have I done? Have I harmed these children? They are neither Celt nor Maori. As they grow up will the social distinctions — and they are quite definite — embitter them, influence them? So many problems! May God help us

... "' Sorrow was changed to joy when she discovered the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh. Alexe later wrote: 'Well, God did help and heaped the mercy and bounty of recognizing Bahá'u'lláh on my heart and the words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá were sweet to my eyes, The lovers of mankind, these are the superior men, of whatever race, creed or colour they may be. To have been able to share the dignity, the wisdom, the love of these words with my children was the greatest moment of my life.'

Alexe worked tirelessly all through the years to bring the message of Bahá'u'lláh to the Maori people. She had a great respect and love for them and prayed that this noble race would respond wholeheartedly to the Bahá'í Cause. She wrote and published *Te Marama* (The Light), a simplified introduction to the Faith which reflected her love for the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh and the Maori people.

In June 1980 she was enabled to make a brief visit to the Holy Land and finally she returned to her native highlands and the relatives of her youth. On 11 October 1980, shortly before she was due to come home to New Zealand, she died at Fort William, Scotland, and is buried at Kilmarcie Cemetery. She is remembered for her very strong sense of humour, her sense of justice and keenness of mind. On 12 October the Continental Board of Counsellors in Australia in its cable to the International Teaching Centre made reference to the GREAT LOSS PROTECTION BOARD OF THIS DEVOTED STEADFAST CONSECRATED MAIDSERVANT. In reply the International Teaching Centre cabled:

HOUSE OF JUSTICE AND TEACHING CENTRE SHARE YOUR DEEP GRIEF PASSING VALIANT DEVOTED MAIDSERVANT ALEXE COOKSON. WARMLY REMEMBER HER RECENT VISIT HOLY SHRINES. PLEASE INFORM HER FAMILY LOVING PRAYERS OFFERED PROGRESS HER SOUL AND THAT MANIFEST BLESSINGS OF BAHAUULLAH BE SHOWERED UPON HER.
NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF NEW ZEALAND

(assisted by IAN and JILL COOKSON)

SHAH BEHRAM MOBEDZADEH

(SHÁH BAHRÁM MÚBIDZÁDIH)

1901-1980

Shah Behram Mobedzadeh was an exemplary Bahá'í — devout, self-sacrificing, sincere in his love for the friends and utterly devoted to the Faith. I first met him in Karachi in 1936. His face was spiritual, his eyes luminous, and his language was an exalted Persian, sweet and inspiring. I was strongly attracted to him at first sight. We met frequently thereafter. In all meetings he spoke of the Faith, its greatness and glorious history; and of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the beloved Guardian. He also spoke with great admiration of the early believers of India. It was my good fortune to travel in his company in 1975 and I availed myself of the opportunity of learning as much as I could of his life and of his record of service to the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh.

He was born on 25 January 1901 into a Zoroastrian family. His ancestors had been priests since the time of Zoroaster. His father, however, left his

ancestral occupation and became an importer, trading in goods from India. Shah Behram was named by his father's sister who was reported to have said, during the naming ceremony, 'God willing, he will

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live to see the Promised One foretold by Zoroaster, "Sháh Bahrám Varjávand" ("The Glory of God").' Shah Behram felt that her hope was fulfilled when he accepted the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh.

Picture in Upper Left Corner of Page with the Caption: Shah Behram Mobedzadeh

When he was sixteen Shah Behram was sent to the house of his sister in Isfahán in order to perfect his Persian. He learned of the Bahá'í Faith through the great teacher Fádil Tihrání whose scholarship and good character deeply impressed him, and in 1925 he became a Bahá'í. 'Immediately thereafter', Shah Behram told me, 'I addressed a letter to the beloved Guardian expressing my utmost obedience and signed myself Shah Behram s/o (son of) Mobed Khuda Bux. Back came a reply in the name of Shah Behram Mobedzadeh. This will explain my surname "Mobedzadeh" which I accepted forthwith.'

In 1928 Shah Behram came to India with letters of introduction and worked in restaurants, first in Bombay and then in Calcutta, although for a few months he was penniless and near despair. In January 1932 he made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land and was privileged to be in the presence of Shoghi Effendi. Speaking of this experience later, Shah Behram remarked that the Guardian was so kind to everyone that each pilgrim felt that he had been singled out to be the recipient of a special measure of love, greater than that bestowed upon the others. 'I cannot describe my parting from the beloved Guardian,' he said, 'for my eyes were veiled with tears. He was filled with understanding and consoled me, emphasizing that I should meet the friends and impress upon them that nothing is more important than teaching and guiding seekers to the Cause. This I did both in India and Írán. Shoghi Effendi would ask me to chant and generously made a kind reference to me, saying that some Zoroastrian priests had accepted the Faith before me, but that I was the first among them to espouse it openly.'

Shah Behram henceforth became a tireless worker for the Faith — travelling, encouraging, inspiring. In 1947 he married Ridván Khánum, the daughter of the distinguished Behman Behi, whose entire life had been devoted to the Faith. In 1945 she became caretaker of the children's hostel in Panchgani. The original hostel which housed twelve children grew to become the New Era High School where Ridván continues to serve as superintendent. In 1964 Shah Behram was appointed a member of the Auxiliary Board and in this capacity travelled all over India. In his seventy-fifth year he remarked, 'I do not feel the sting of age. I derive inspiration from the example of the late Hand of the Cause Tarázu'lláh Samandarí who even in his nineties travelled in service to the Faith like a young man. I know that there is only one joy in life — to surrender everything to Bahá'u'lláh, to live for Him and die for Him.'

During the last two years of his life he was often confined to bed but in spirit he was always preparing to travel and was full of plans to advance the work of the Faith. He spoke only of the greatness of the Cause, the lives of the martyrs, the services of the Hands of the Cause of God, and described interesting and inspiring situations that arose in his lifetime. On 17 October 1980 he bade farewell to all and started his journey in the world of immortals. The Universal House of Justice paid him a glowing tribute in its cable of 23 October:

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GRIEVED PASSING STEADFAST DEVOTED PROMOTER CAUSE SHAH BEHRAM MOBEDZADEH. HIS DECADES UNINTERRUPTED UNFORGETTABLE SERVICES CAUSE CONTRIBUTED STRENGTHENING FOUNDATION FAITH INDIA. OURSELVES AND MEMBERS INTERNATIONAL TEACHING CENTRE PRAYING ARDENTLY HOLY SHRINES BESEECH PROGRESS HIS SOUL ABHA KINGDOM. CONVEY WIFE FRIENDS OUR SYMPATHY. ADVISE HOLD BEFITTING MEMORIAL GATHERINGS.

(Based on a memoir by DIPCHAND KHIANRA)

LEONORA STIRLING ARMSTRONG

1895-1980

Rio de Janeiro: At dawn on 1 February 1921, the S.S. Vasari plowed through sparkling waters into the majestic harbor. Below deck, in second-class accommodation, watching, stood an attractive, cultured young woman, a lone American. In her heart she nourished the vision of an unspeakably glorious mission, the spread of the Light of God in this day to an entire continent. In her purse, all her savings, barely enough for two weeks' modest expenses. No friends in the city, no job. She spoke no Portuguese. Odd circumstances for one who so readily confessed a lack of self-confidence. Clearly her reliance was placed elsewhere.

Panama City: Half a century later at an international conference held in connection with the dedication of the first Bahá'í House of Worship in Latin America, this same slight and soft-spoken woman — Leonora Stirling Armstrong — was presented to the thousands of believers gathered there. Spontaneously they rose to pay tribute to her achievements. What emotions must have surged within her weakened frame, now bent with long toil, as she surveyed these children of her dream. For here were fervent followers of Bahá'u'lláh raised up from every country of Latin America, of every color, clime and custom. Here was her vision made real; like Saint Peter she cast the seeds, and now witnessed a heavenly harvest. Heartbreaks and anxiety; aches, pains and fevers — how they all took on divine meaning.

Picture in Upper Right Corner with the Caption: Leonora Stirling Armstrong

On 23 June 1895, in a pleasant two-story house, high on a rise overlooking the Hudson River and the Catskill range beyond, a first child was born to Samuel Norris Holsapple and his beautiful wife, Grace Stirling. They named her Leonora. The Holsapples were well-known in the then little town of Hudson, New York, where they had settled after their marriage. The gifted Mrs. Holsapple

served actively in civic work, and had taught school. The childhood of Leonora was, however, soon overshadowed with tragedy and sadness, for her mother's health steadily declined. Just after her precious daughter's fifth birthday she died.

Mrs. Holsapple's untimely death had a profound effect on Leonora and her younger sister, Alethe. They never again had what could truly be called a home. 'How we could endure', Leonora herself recounts, 'through those years of our childhood and adolescence, such loneliness, such suffering, even cruelty, I do not know ... I can remember how when still a small child, often at night before going to bed, I knelt down at my sister's bedside and in agony of soul, implored God with all the intensity of my being to let us feel His Presence, His nearness, His protection. Little

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did I then dream in what way, and how specifically, that prayer was later to be answered!'1

Despite her suffering Leonora was a gifted student all through her childhood. In her high school graduating class she received the highest honors and was made valedictorian. She was able to enter Cornell University on a scholarship and was elected Phi Beta Kappa in her junior year.

Though she attended church from an early age, Leonora was somewhat disillusioned by what she experienced there. When she was about thirteen her maternal grandmother, 'Mother Stirling', who had by then after long years of spiritual searching found and embraced the Bahá'í Faith, first began to teach her granddaughters the truths of the New Day. The example of Mother Stirling's devotion and many efforts to spread the Bahá'í teachings made a lasting impression on Leonora's sensitive nature. She was greatly attracted to the new Revelation and began to memorize passages and prayers from the Writings. Already at that time she made her own efforts to share the Message with her classmates and friends.

After graduation from college she taught Latin in high schools and was active in social work as her mother and grandmother had been before her. During this period she came in close contact with a number of prominent early believers, among them the Obers and, in particular, May Maxwell. 'May, more than anyone else, helped me to feel the great love of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the reality of love, which I had longed to feel, and a deep bond was formed between us, which gave me the greatest joy I had known.'2 Others, too, such as Roy Wilhelm and the Kinneys, inspired her with their immense devotion to the Faith.

The desire to pioneer first stirred in Leonora's soul when 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Tablets of the Divine Plan were unveiled at the Bahá'í Convention held in New York in 1919. Spontaneously, and at once, she wrote to the Master, offering herself in service. Thou hadst, was His reply, expressed thy great wish to be of service to the Divine Threshold and to heal the infirm with the Divine Panacea — the infirm who is afflicted with passion and self. Spiritual malady

is more severe than physical illness for it may be that the latter may be converted by the least remedy into health and vigor, while the former will not be cured by a thousand well-known remedies ... My hope is that thou mayest become a spiritual physician.³

As Leonora recounts it: 'This hope of the Master's became my highest aspiration and when, early in 1920, I read His Tablet to Martha Root, commending her teaching work in South America and stressing the importance of its being followed up by others, it at once seemed to me that here there might be a definite task for me. A letter to Martha brought an immediate reply, with all encouragement.'⁴ Martha Root had opened South America with her historic visit there in 1919. Her response to Leonora was whole-hearted. She shared thrilling accounts of her experiences and gave her young recruit a copy of her own diary notes from that period. Brazil was finally decided on as the best place to go first.

The grave concerns of relatives and friends alike now assailed her: to expose herself to the dangers and rigors of such a far-off country, much of it a jungle, alone, friendless, and without knowledge of the language — why it was nothing less than foolhardy! 'I felt my resolution weakening, when some social work in the northern part of New York State gave me the sudden idea to slip up to Montreal to consult May Maxwell. Although ill, May, on hearing the situation, sat upright in bed and in ringing tones which still vibrate in my memory, said, "Leonora, what are you waiting for? Go!" "I will take the next boat," I replied.'⁵

And so it was that on 15 January 1921 she set sail from New York on a divine adventure destined to span no less than sixty years. In doing so, she became one of a handful of valiant souls who arose in response to 'Abdu'l-Bahá's call during His Own lifetime, and the first Bahá'í pioneer to settle permanently in Latin America.

Had not the Master promised confirmation to those souls who, like unto Peter and Paul, would journey to South America with the requisite qualities of 'perfect severance, devotion, firmness and steadfastness in the Covenant'?⁶ Leonora knew this meant severance

1 Unpublished memoirs.

2 *ibid.*

3 Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Bahá'í International Archives.

4 Unpublished memoirs.

5 *ibid.*

6 *ibid.*

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from dearest friends, comforts, profession, from everything ... '1 Martha Root had herself impressed this upon her. And now she was to be surrounded and

sustained by such divine confirmations.

Leonora's original intention had been to proceed from Rio to Bahia, the northeastern city mentioned by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in the Tablets of the Divine Plan — the only city so blessed in the southern hemisphere. But the way opened shortly after her arrival in Rio to teach the Faith in Santos to the south. There she stayed with a family who, in a letter to Martha Root, had expressed interest in knowing more about the Faith. Her quarters were very humble but it was a start.

Life in her land of spiritual adoption was never easy. She often suffered from loneliness, meagre means, malnutrition and illness. Gradually as she became proficient in the Portuguese language, she was better able to support herself. Still, it required long working hours, sometimes at several jobs just to keep body and soul together. She found teaching English, which was the main avenue open to her, to be a valuable way of meeting people and interesting them in the Faith.

Just three months after settling in Santos, Leonora learned of the loss of her beloved grandmother, the spiritual mother of her heart. Later that same year a profounder grief overtook her when news came of the passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. She had so intensely longed to meet Him in this life. Providentially, from Bahjí in June 1921, 'Abdu'l-Bahá had revealed a second Tablet for her. This Tablet became a source of great comfort to her not only in that time of tragedy but throughout the long years ahead. The Master had addressed the envelope simply: 'Brazil. To the Maidservant of God, Leonora Stirling Holsapple.' Amazingly it reached her, as the Master no doubt knew it would. In the text He refers to Leonora as a Herald of the Kingdom, calls upon her to thank God that thou hast enlightened thy sight, and art giving light to the sight of others, too, refers by name to a number of seekers, and promises that the intoxicated friends will grow in rapture and ecstasy, begin to break into melodies and harmonies and raise such a tune that will reach the Supreme Concourse and rejoice and exhilarate the holy ones. He, likewise, advises her to say that the entering into this Divine Cause is accompanied by everlasting honor and eternal sovereignty.²

'Soon the beloved Guardian's messages began to reach me, urging me never to become discouraged, rather to redouble my efforts, and guiding me with his unfailing wisdom.'³ Indeed, throughout his ministry Shoghi Effendi's esteem for her and her services was clearly evident. His love for her and his warm encouragement of her work lasted till the end of his life and are recorded in the tender words he addressed to her in many letters: 'I feel deeply attached to your work.'⁴ 'Your name I assure you will adorn the annals of the Cause and will inspire many a Bahá'í pioneer in future. You cannot realize the splendour and significance of the work you are doing at present.'⁵ 'I will pray that you may be guided and fortified by the spirit of our beloved Master Who I am sure is guiding you, watching over you and sustaining you in your labours. Persevere and never lose heart.'⁶

A survey of Leonora Armstrong's tireless pioneer activities must necessarily span six decades of continual service. Her achievements marked a high tide of human endeavor. Whether in her constant teaching of individuals, her historic travels, the publicity she garnered for the Cause wherever she went, her herculean labor of translating, publishing and disseminating Bahá'í literature both in Portuguese and Spanish, her work in spreading the Message through correspondence, or her eventual material contributions to the community, she stands out eminently distinguished. Through the years she also engaged in social service whenever possible, and became known in the press as the 'Nurse of the Poor'.

The first decade of these activities is marked by extraordinary travels. Twice during the ten years, her father sent funds for a return visit to New York. By careful economy she was able to visit many places along the way. By sailing

1 Unpublished memoirs.

2 Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Bahá'í International Archives.

3 Unpublished memoirs.

4 From a handwritten postscript of Shoghi Effendi in a letter written to Leonora Holsapple, 30 July 1932.

5 From a handwritten postscript of Shoghi Effendi in a letter written to Leonora Holsapple, 18 August 1927.

6 From a handwritten postscript of Shoghi Effendi in a letter written to Leonora Holsapple, 5 April 1930.

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third class, she included countries not on her route. In this way she was able to emblazon the Cause of God in city after city up the Brazilian coast, into the heartland of the Amazon basin, and throughout the Caribbean Sea. Between these travels she raised the banner of the Faith in Sao Paulo, in Rio and particularly in Bahia through extended stays. A number of souls were attracted to the beauty of the Teachings. Alone in Manaus on the Amazon River, to cite one instance, during a short visit she proclaimed the Faith to 3,400 souls in public meetings and school gatherings.

In 1927 she became the first Bahá'í to visit and speak of the Cause in Colombia, Venezuela, Curaco, Trinidad, Barbados, Haiti, British Guiana and Dutch Guiana, thus complimenting and completing Martha Root's unfulfilled intention of raising the Call of God in all the Latin American countries. The visits of this pure, self-effacing soul, so modest in her personal life, were, paradoxically, always amply reported in the press. And she often enjoyed the spontaneous cooperation and support of various organizations in arranging public meetings. All this occurred in some places within hours of her arrival!

During her stay in Santos Leonora began her prodigious and historic task of translating Bahá'í literature into Portuguese; at first it was a simple

pamphlet to distribute at her talks — often typed over and over on her small portable typewriter — later, as her skills developed, an intense outpouring of the major works of the Faith. In the end she had rendered into Portuguese a wide range of literature, and for several decades, under the guidance and with the generous assistance of Shoghi Effendi, had personally seen to its publication. When a Bahá'í Publishing Trust was founded in Rio, and the National Spiritual Assembly of Brazil came into being in 1961, she worked closely with these institutions, adding such long and weighty works as *God Passes By* and *The Dawn-Breakers* to her already highly-distinguished record of accomplishments.

By the late 1920s, having made many contacts in Spanish-speaking countries, Leonora was increasingly concerned with producing adequate Spanish translations as well. She decided to proceed to Spain for a course of study in the University of Madrid to better equip herself. In July 1930 she boarded a French ship which first took her to several ports of call in West Africa and then to Barcelona. As always she taught along the way. From Barcelona she proceeded to Madrid where through her efforts she was able to found the first Bahá'í group of Spain. As she fell seriously ill for a time, she was unable to enter the course at the University and shortly felt inspired to ask the Guardian for permission to come to the Holy Land and visit the Bahá'í Holy Places. He cabled her MOST WELCOME on 2 November 1930.¹ Leonora describes how, when meeting Shoghi Effendi, she 'was awed, overwhelmed, by the spiritual majesty of his presence, his love, his purity'.² She frequently visited the Holy Shrines to pour out her heart in prayer. She had the immense privilege of meeting Bahíyyih Khánum, the beloved sister of 'Abdu'l-Bahá on several occasions. 'On the day set for my departure, the Greatest Holy Leaf was sitting near the door and I knelt down before her in tears, while she gently, lovingly, stroked my head.'³ In saying good-bye, Shoghi Effendi emphasized that 'of first importance is the direct teaching work, second in importance is the translation, and third social service, if you have time for it.'⁴

During the 1930s more travelling teachers visited South America and additional pioneer settlers gradually strengthened the work Leonora had begun. This was especially so after the launching of the first American Seven Year Plan in 1937 which aimed at the systematic spread of the Faith throughout Latin America.

For Leonora these visits reached their culmination when her beloved May Maxwell traveled to South America in February 1940. They were able to spend some wonderful days together in Rio, and then Mrs. Maxwell went on to Argentina, with the intention of visiting Bahia on her return trip. Leonora went home to Bahia to prepare for this visit, only to be met upon her arrival with the tragic news of May Maxwell's passing in Buenos Aires. She was able to attend the funeral and through this

1 Cablegram of Shoghi Effendi, 2 November 1930, Bahá'í International Archives.

2 Unpublished memoirs.

3 *ibid.*

4 *ibid.*

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visit came in contact with the handful of Bahá'ís in Buenos Aires and Montevideo.

The following year, 1941, Leonora married an Englishman, Harold Armstrong, whom she had known for some time. He was destined to support and comfort her through the years ahead in her unceasing Bahá'í services. During the next two decades Leonora and her husband lived in various places in Brazil and raised several adopted children. In 1946 she helped form the first Local Spiritual Assembly of Rio itself. During the 1950s she spent much time at their farm outside Rio, and continued her important translation work. At this time she added Braille to her skills and undertook the transcription and distribution of Bahá'í literature in Portuguese Braille.

In 1961 the first National Spiritual Assembly of Brazil was established. Leonora could now rest assured that all the activities she had begun would be consolidated and perpetuated. One might have thought her work was drawing to a close, passed to the hands of the many capable younger believers. The crowning labors of Leonora's sixty years of international service, however, were still ahead. For it was in June of 1973 that the Universal House of Justice appointed her to membership on the Continental Board of Counselors in South America. Characteristically overwhelmed, and apprehensive regarding her own inadequacies, she nevertheless flew off to her first meeting with that Board in Lima, Peru. From the outset it was clear that the spiritual influence of direct contact with her fellow-believers in the various lands she would visit was to be far-reaching. During those first memorable meetings in Lima, young and old literally sat at her feet imbibing the radiant love, the immense tenderness, which flowed forth in waves of healing from her whole being. It was always a spiritual feast to be with her. She seemed to move in the shadow of her Guardian, and one always felt him close in her presence.

Among the joyful events of Leonora's latter years were the visits to Latin America made by the Hand of the Cause, Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánúm, the Guardian's widow, and the daughter of May and Sutherland Maxwell. It was in her presence, in April 1971, at the time of the dedication of the Mother Temple of Latin America in Panama, that the homage mentioned earlier, was paid to Leonora. On the several occasions that Amatu'l-Bahá visited Brazil, they spent as much time together as possible. Rúhíyyih Khánúm recollects a little of their long association in the following words: 'When Leonora went to South America she was over twenty-five years old and I was fifteen years younger. My first vivid recollection of her was when, on one of her return visits to America in the 1920s, she came to the hotel in New York where my mother and I were staying; she was tall and slender with brown hair, a sallow complexion and droopy brown eyes in which was an expression of sincerity, of purpose and purity of spirit. Her personality seemed to have united the tenacity of Martha

Root with an unsureness of herself which she constantly overcame through her complete consecration to serving the Faith. I must have seen her many times before this, because she and my mother had a profound bond of love and I loved her too. Mother always took a keen personal interest in people and was very generous; she disapproved of Leonora's wardrobe and insisted that at her expense she go buy some summer frocks and other things. The only other intimate thing I remember about those hours we had together was her description of how she had been living — at least in the beginning — in the home of a family in a single room which had no doors or windows except one big door that opened onto the garden; she was greatly disturbed by two things, the huge cockroaches that crawled across the ceiling and sometimes fell on her in bed in the night, and the fact that she had an unwelcome admirer who would come into the garden and heave huge bouquets through the open door as a tribute to his would-be lady love. When she closed the door, in that tropical heat, she suffocated!

'Shoghi Effendi considered Leonora as one of the Faith's outstanding and most distinguished believers in the West, he never forgot the great historic significance of her arising to pioneer in Latin America before the passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and in his letters to her he warmly praised her exemplary and ceaseless services, in which he took a keen interest.

'Our friendship, strong and deep in both our lives, was renewed and reinforced on the rare but prized occasions when we met during my visits to Latin America and spent as much

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time together as my schedule permitted; the last time was at the meeting of the South American Counselors in Lima, Peru, at the end of the Green Light Expedition in 1975; always we would talk about my mother — our greatest mutual bond.

'The study of such a life as Leonora's, a life of complete consecration to Bahá'u'lláh and His teachings, a life of ceaseless work which lasted till a few hours before her passing at the age of eighty-five, a life in which it never even occurred to Leonora that she was sacrificing — such a life is a manual for every generation of Bahá'ís to study and presents an enduring challenge to all those who would follow in her footsteps.'

Seven years of service were left to Leonora after she was appointed a Counselor. Her back somewhat humped, bent by years and years of translation and typing, literally often day and night, her neck stiff and increasingly painful, the valiant and indomitable Leonora, far from relaxing her efforts, extended her activities and travels immensely. Her husband had already passed away and between her trips she was able to concentrate long hours on the translation work. Gradually, however, her health began to fail. A serious illness finally confined her to bed, and during her last months she was moved to Bahia — the city where she had labored so arduously to establish the Faith sixty years before, a city now boasting ten thousand believers. Here the friends lovingly ministered to her last needs. Even in the final week of her life she rallied

her strength for one last outpouring. Propped up in her bed she wrote out a translation of the newly-arrived English version of Bahá'u'lláh's Long Healing Prayer and of the Fire Tablet — a final legacy for her many spiritual children.

The longing for service came to her young. The vastness of Latin America was the arena of her sacrifice. There she poured forth her life, and having given up the world, she gained the Kingdom. At the end she was incarnate light. Even before she slipped from her earthly vesture, the unearthly radiance of her inner being surrounded those attending her. On 17 October 1980 her precious spirit quietly took flight to its celestial Source.

The Universal House of Justice promptly cabled the following tribute:

HEARTS SADDENED PASSING DISTINGUISHED COUNSELOR LEONORA STIRLING ARMSTRONG
HERALD OF THE KINGDOM BELOVED HANDMAIDEN ABDULBAHA SPIRITUAL MOTHER SOUTH
AMERICA. HER SIXTY YEARS VALIANT DEVOTED SERVICES CAUSE BRAZIL SHEDS LUSTRE
ANNALS FAITH THAT PROMISING LAND. REQUESTING MEMORIAL SERVICES MASHRIQULADHK
WILMETTE PANAMA URGE ALL COMMUNITIES BRAZIL LIKEWISE HOLD SERVICES. OFFERING
ARDENT SUPPLICATIONS MOST HOLY SHRINE PROGRESS HER RADIANT SPIRIT ABHA KINGDOM
HOOPER C. DUNBAR

LORETTA L. SCHERER
1907-1980

CARL A. SCHERER
1900-1982
Knights of Bahá'u'lláh

EXPRESS LOVING SYMPATHY LOSS YOUR DEAR PARTNER KNIGHT BAHULLAH LORETTA
SCHERER. YOUR JOINT SERVICES ENGRAVED ANNALS BELOVED GUARDIANS GREAT CRUSADE
ASSURE PRAYERS SACRED THRESHOLD PROGRESS HER SOUL ABHA KINGDOM.

Universal House of Justice, 31 October 1980

SADDENED LEARN PASSING DEVOTED SERVANT CARL SCHERER KNIGHT BAHULLAH MACAO
OFFERING ARDENT PRAYERS HOLY SHRINES PROGRESS HIS SOUL KINGDOMS GOD.

Universal House of Justice, 14 October 1982

Dad will always be remembered for his devotion, for his indefatigable travelling in the service of the Blessed Beauty, for his love for all races, for his patience and gentleness, and for his love of music and violin-making. He was born on 7 March 1900, the third of four children of Robert W. and Ida (Koch) Scherer, in New Ulm, Minnesota, U.S.A.

Mother will always be remembered for her kindness, her tireless devoted service to everyone, her consecrated promotion and protection of the Cause of God and for her beautiful smile. She considered unimportant her pre-

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Picture in Upper Left Corner with the Caption:

Loretta L. Scherer

Carl A. Scherer

Bahá'í life, but for the history books let me state that she was born on 8 December 1907 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, the fourth of twelve children of Herman and Elsie (Lyman) Bremer. She married Dad on 28 February 1925. I was born on 22 September 1929, their only child.

We travelled and moved many times as my father was a salesman. From 1931 until 1936 we lived in China where Dad worked for the Texas Oil Company. Mother enjoyed horseback riding and acting in the theatre at this time. But always we gravitated back to Milwaukee where most of our family lived. Mrs. Florence Petersen, who was to become my mother-in-law, heard of the Bahá'í Faith first. Within six months she and her husband, Charles, and their son Glenn and I, became Bahá'ís in Wauwatosa, Wisconsin, on 12 January 1949. Glenn and I were married in August of that year and moved to Madison where Glenn was finishing his last year at the University of Wisconsin. We came back to Wauwatosa to visit in November, and what a beautiful surprise — my parents had just become Bahá'ís and were present at the Feast. It was the happiest feeling being part of an entirely Bahá'í family.

When the Ten Year Crusade was launched in 1953, Mother and Dad volunteered to pioneer to Macao, for which service they were named Knights of Bahá'u'lláh.¹ Dad was appointed an Auxiliary Board member in 1954. Sometimes Mother travelled with him and sometimes she held down the homefront in Macao where they helped raise a Local Spiritual Assembly. She and Dad attended the Teaching Conference in Nikko, Japan, in September 1955 and both may be seen in the conference photograph, a copy of which hangs in the Mansion of Bahjí.

In 1958 Mother and Dad returned to the United States and lived for a short time in Shorewood, Wisconsin. Then, in 1959, they pioneered again, this time to Portugal. They lived in Lisbon for a short while and finally settled in Sintra (formerly Cintra) where they helped form a Local Spiritual Assembly. They made teaching trips to Faro, Portinao and Espina. Dad was elected to the National Spiritual Assembly of Portugal and had the privilege of voting for the members of the first Universal House of Justice. He voted by mail as he was unable to afford to travel to the Holy Land. Dad was very sick in January 1963 and, with their work completed in Portugal, they attended the London Conference in April 1963 on their way home to Milwaukee.

Their longing to be of service resulted in their winging their way, in 1970, to Funchal, Madeira, where they served with Ed Bode.² In March 1973 they went back to Macao, stopping in Haifa for pilgrimage. Mother's poor health and the difficulty of finding accommodation they could afford in Macao forced their return to the United States in June 1973. Here they settled in Burlington, Wisconsin, a homefront goal city. Mother suffered a cerebral haemorrhage on 1 October 1980. The Hand of the Cause Dhikru'lláh Khádem chanted prayers at her sick-bed. On 30 October she passed on and was buried in the Burlington Cemetery. On 10 October 1982 Dad died of congestive heart failure and was buried next to Mother. I thank God for my beautiful and extraordinary parents

who have shown forth pure and holy deeds. Al-

1 Shoghi Effendi, Messages to the Bahá'í World, p. 57.

2 See 'In Memoriam', The Bahá'í World, vol. XVI, p. 566.

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most everywhere they lived, even before they became Bahá'ís, now seems to be blessed with a flourishing Bahá'í community. They lived in New Ulm, Minnesota; Milwaukee, Shorewood, Wauwatosa, Wausau and Burlington, Wisconsin; Austin, Texas; Kingston, Jamaica; Shanghai and Tsingtao, China; Mukden (now in Russia); Charlotte, North Carolina; Mechanicsburg No. 3, Pennsylvania; Evanston, Illinois; Macao; Sintra, Portugal and Funchal, Madeira. If it is true that the presence of pure and detached souls in a community attracts divine bounties, might we not confidently expect that Burlington, Wisconsin, Funchal, Shanghai, Tsingtao and Mukden will in time be abundantly showered with substantial blessings?

DOROTHY VIRGINIA (SCHERER) PETERSEN

HAROLD SHEPHERD

1909-1980

Harold Shepherd passed to the Abhá Kingdom on 13 November 1980 at his home in the Orkney Islands. The National Spiritual Assembly cabled the World Centre:

GRIEVED NEWS PASSING LAST NIGHT STALWART SERVANT BHAULLAH HAROLD SHEPHERD. I STEADFASTNESS UNWAVERING LOYALTY LONG-STANDING PIONEER RECORD LABOURS ESTABLISHMENT CAUSE GOD SCOTTISH HIGHLANDS MADE HIM VITAL INSTRUMENT DEVELOPMENT FAITH ISLANDS NORTH SEA EARNED HIM GRATITUDE BRITISH BAHAI COMMUNITY. FAITHFULLY HE REMAINED AT HIS IMPORTANT PIONEER OUTPOST ORKNEYS UNTIL HE HASTENED ABHA KINGDOM. BESEECH PRAYERS PROGRESS HIS VALIANT SOUL.

Harold became a Bahá'í in October 1956. At the National Teaching Conference in Blackpool in January 1959 he and his family volunteered to pioneer to Iverness in the Scottish Highlands, the most northerly British goal town of the beloved Guardian's Ten Year Crusade. Harold, his wife and their two children, aged nine and eleven, spent the Easter holiday that year on a campsite on the outskirts of the town, waking up on the first morning to find the tent surrounded by snow. All doors seemed to be closed as neither accommodation nor employment could be found. They returned to Manchester but returned to Iverness in July intending to devote their summer holiday to attempting to get settled. Their faith was rewarded: within a week they had acquired a house that was to become a real Bahá'í home for countless pioneers, travelling teachers and friends, and would later become the 'gateway to the islands', as most of the Bahá'ís who travelled to the Western Isles, Orkneys and Shetlands passed through Iverness. It was virtually impossible for Harold, already in his fifties, to find work so he took on the task of running the home while his wife, Betty, worked full time as a teacher. Thus began twenty-two years of continuous, active service to the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh.

When Harold was serving on the Scottish Teaching Committee a project was developed under which Bahá'ís of independent means spent three-month periods in Orkney. Harold purchased 'Little Gorse Cottage' to further that project and that house, too, became a home for many pioneers and travelling teachers.

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The fruit of their pioneering was the establishment of a strong Local Spiritual Assembly in Iverness. This accomplished, Betty and Harold, in September 1972, pioneered to Uganda where Betty could bring her professional knowledge and experience to the running of Claire Gung's kindergarten. Harold had already suffered a heart attack before leaving for Africa but this did not prevent him from fulfilling his pledge. He was soon appointed to the committee charged with the care of Bahá'í properties which included two Bahá'í schools and three teaching institutes in different districts, as well as the House of Worship and Hazíratu'l-Quds on Kikaaya Hill in Kampala. He became the vital force, together with Stuart Rhodes from the United States, in renovating the House of Worship. On an occasion when thieves broke into Claire Gung's kindergarten Harold was wounded in his efforts to protect Miss Gung. Only a providential fall over a roll of carpet protected him from fatal injury, as the knife, or panga, had been aimed at his head.

In February 1976 Harold's health deteriorated and he returned to Iverness alone, as Betty could not at that time leave 'Auntie' Claire to cope unaided at the kindergarten. They had intended to meet again at the Nairobi Conference in October. This separation was possibly Harold's greatest sacrifice for he had always been part of a family team. He did not return to Africa. In May of that year he had another heart attack which brought Betty back to Scotland. Later in 1976, when he recovered, they pioneered to the Orkney Islands, a post they had offered to fill in 1972 as a possible alternative to Uganda. Harold became the chairman of the Orkney Local Spiritual Assembly, an institution for whose establishment he had worked so hard in earlier years. Even as his health deteriorated Harold offered unwavering support to Betty in her service as a member of the Auxiliary Board for Propagation in Scotland.

Harold Shepherd's life was dedicated entirely to serving Bahá'u'lláh. Though not young when he embraced the Cause, he learned by heart numerous Tablets and prayers; they were his spiritual food. He was the embodiment of worship and of service. The harvest of his labours is evident in the development of the Faith throughout the north of Scotland and the Scottish Islands, and he had his own special part to play in service to the Faith in Uganda. On 17 November 1980 the Universal House of Justice cabled:

PASSING DEVOTED SERVANT BHAULLAH HAROLD SHEPHERD DEPRIVES BRITISH COMMUNITY
OUTSTANDING VETERAN BELIEVER WHOSE DEDICATED SERVICES ASSOCIATED HISTORIC
EPISODES AFRICA PROJECT TEN YEAR CRUSADE. FIRM ESTABLISHMENT FAITH SCOTLAND
ORKNEYS. COMMUNITY COMPENSATED HIS UNFLAGGING DEDICATION BRILLIANT EXAMPLE
RISING GENERATION. EXTEND LOVING SYMPATHY MEMBERS FAMILY ASSURE PRAYERS SACRIFICE
THRESHOLD PROGRESS HIS SOUL.

(Adapted from a memoir in Bahá'í Monthly News Service, United Kingdom, February 1981)

SOLOMON KAHALOA
1932-1980

It is impossible to speak of Solomon Kahaloa — known as 'Sol' to his many friends — without speaking of his family, for it was as a family that they served the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh. One of Sol's sons was the first to accept the Faith through the teaching of various friends, including David Schreiber, the Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for the Leeward Islands, but in a very short time the entire family had embraced it and begun to serve actively on their home island of Hawaii in the State of Hawaii.

The Kahaloa family, drawing strength from Sol, was instrumental in forming the first Local Spiritual Assembly of Puna, Hawaii. An old-fashioned house raising, in which Bahá'ís from all over the Island took part, provided the first Bahá'í Center for the Puna community. It was situated, as is the present Center, on land donated by Sol. He was well-known in Hawaii, and later on Guam, for his Hawaiian luaus, complete with kalua (or pit-roasted) pig and Hawaiian music. One of these events was the scene of the declaration of twenty-six souls including some tourists

1 See p. 209.

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Picture in the Upper Left Corner with the Caption: Solomon Kahaloa

from passing buses. Sol had arranged a hukilau (an outdoor feast at which a large fishing net attached to a long rope is placed in and then pulled from the sea). As these visitors to Hawaii assisted in hauling in the rope they were themselves drawn into the ocean of the Most Great Remembrance.

In the early 1970s the Kahaloa family moved to South Hilo on the Big Island where they rented a large house for the purpose of attracting and teaching youth about Hawaiian arts and crafts as well as introducing them to the Bahá'í Faith. They worked tirelessly before, during and after the 1974 Bahá'í International Youth Conference, an event still warmly remembered there and around the world by Bahá'ís and non-Bahá'ís alike.

Guam, a goal of the Hawaii Bahá'í community, has a sizeable population of Hawaiians, and the Kahaloas have relatives there. Those facts, and the desire to serve as pioneers, brought Sol, his wife, Emily, and their two youngest children, Bonnie and Sam, to the tiny southern village of Inarajan in 1975. The family immediately plunged into Bahá'í activities. Sol continued the tradition of preparing one of his famous luaus with its blend of physical and 'spiritual' food. The family lived at first in an old wooden house near Inarajan Bay. A few months after settling into their home it and all their possessions were swept away by typhoon Pamela. With the assistance of their son, Greg, helpful friends and the Red Cross, the Kahaloas were moved into a

small apartment a few miles further south. That apartment and two vacant ones became the site of a Bahá'í winter school later that year, and a nearby private beach owned by Sol's employer was made available for a Bahá'í youth camp-out, activities for which, as always, Sol and his family provided the food. Later they moved to Mangilao in the central part of Guam where their home again became a center for Bahá'í activity and the sharing of Hawaiian-style hospitality.

In 1980, at the request of the National Teaching Committee of the Mariana Islands, Sol made a trip to the small neighboring island of Rota. Emily met him at the airport upon his return. On the way to their home their vehicle was struck by another car, injuring both Emily and Sol. A few days later, on 1 December 1980, Sol succumbed to his injuries and pneumonia. During his last days he talked animatedly of the Rota teaching trip, the great potential for teaching the Faith there, and his plans to move his family to that island to spread the Message of Bahá'u'lláh. Throughout his years as a Bahá'í he gave open-handedly of his possessions, his kindness, patience and love, and finally his life itself for the love of his Lord. He lived and died with the promise of Bahá'u'lláh ... We behold you from Our realm of glory, and shall aid whomsoever will arise for the triumph of Our Cause with the host of the Concourse on high and a company of Our favored angels.¹ We, his co-workers who are left behind, joyfully trust that Sol has joined that favored company. The Universal House of Justice, in its cable of 4 December, gave voice to the thoughts of the Bahá'ís of Hawaii and Guam:

GRIEVED LEARN PASSING SOLOMON KAHALOA DEVOTED PIONEER. ASSURE FAMILY FRIENDS
ARDENT PRAYERS HOLY SHRINES PROGRESS HIS SOUL.
RICHARD GRAHAM

¹ Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 139.

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Picture in Upper Left Corner with the Caption: 'Ismat Vahdat

'ISMAT (ESMAT) VAHDAT
1900-1980

Mrs. 'Ismat Vahdat, who was born and raised in Írán, was an example of devotion in her Bahá'í life. Her faith radiated from her face. She was always cheerful, confident and a source of comfort to the friends.

When, in 1943-1944, the beloved Guardian called for Iranian pioneers, she volunteered to go to 'Iráq, although she was a single woman, having been widowed at an early age. When the government of 'Iráq required the pioneers to leave that country she went to Tihrán to serve in the Education Centre, an institution that catered [sic] for Bahá'í orphans and needy children. Under her management the children had a very happy home. However, the Guardian's call for pioneers during the Ten Year Crusade again stirred her heart. She left Tihrán in 1955 or 1956 and after a brief visit to India pioneered to Indonesia where she moved from place to place as the need arose in order to be of use to

the Bahá'í community.

From 1970 until her life ended on 9 December 1980 she served in the hostel for Bahá'í children in Mentawai in Padang. This institute was created in 1970 by the Hand of the Cause of God Rahmatu'lláh Muhájir who had advised Mr. Manúchihir Tahmásibiyán, a young Persian pioneer in Thailand, to re-establish himself in Padang to manage the hostel. Mrs. Vahdat, who at that time lived in Java, was requested to settle in Padang in order to assist in developing the project. Her passion for the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, her deep love of children and her experience in the Education Centre in Tihrán made her service in the hostel a blessing. Scores of the children of Mentawai and of other parts of Indonesia consider 'Ismat Vahdat as their mother. When the news of her death reached the World Centre, the Universal House of Justice cabled on 22 December:

SADDENED NEWS PASSING STAUNCH STEADFAST DEVOTED PIONEER ESMAT VAHDAT. HER SACRIFICES PATH PIONEERING SERVICE FAITH OVER THREE DECADES HER MOTHERLY LOVE CARE BAHAI CHILDREN HOSTEL PADANG UNFORGETTABLE. OFFER ARDENT PRAYERS HOLY SHRINES PROGRESS HER SOUL.

PEDRO VARGAS

1940-1980

Pedro Vargas, a Toba Indian, born on 7 August 1940 in Argentina, was among the first of his tribe to embrace the Bahá'í Faith and is to date the most distinguished of its followers among his people to have passed to the worlds beyond.

The first efforts to enrol the Tobas of the Chaco province of Argentina were undertaken immediately following the Continental Conference held in La Paz, Bolivia, in August 1970. In three successive projects more than one thousand people entered the Cause. The records of the first believers to accept the Faith in the locality of Makalle bear the name of Pedro's father, Vicente Vargas, who was well-known as a former tribal leader or cacique and as a pastor of a local evangelical church. Pedro was respected by his people as one of the 'learned'. Like his father, he had served as pastor of an Indian church and was well versed in Christian scriptures. He was also knowledge-

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Picture in Upper Left Corner with the Caption: Pedro Vargas

able about the medicinal properties of the plants and herbs native to the Chaco and their application to various human ailments.

From the moment of his acceptance of the call of the New Day Pedro arose, first, to deepen his knowledge of the fundamental verities of the Bahá'í Faith, and then to travel and share it with his Toba brethren. Later, in response to the goals of the Nine Year Plan, he made the first translations of the Bahá'í Sacred Writings into the Toba language. Though the written form of Toba is still in its early stages of development and few members of the tribe are familiar with its use, Pedro could both read and write his native tongue.

His translations include a selection of prayers, selections from The Hidden Words of Bahá'u'lláh, and 'Unity in Diversity', one of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's discourses from Paris Talks.

Among Pedro's accomplishments was his continual participation in teaching projects which were to raise the standard of Bahá'u'lláh throughout the Chaco area and bring His light to thousands of new souls. In 1972 he took part in the opening of the Miraflores reservation and continued until his death to nurture that community as a travelling teacher. In 1975 he joined the team that opened to the Faith the Bartholome de las Casas reservation in the province of Formosa. In 1977, at the invitation of the National Spiritual Assembly of Paraguay, he assisted in the enrolment of the first Toba believers in the locality of Cerrito near Asunción. The following year, accompanied by Francisco Gómez, he made an historic fifteen-day journey on foot into an area of the Chaco now known as 'the impenetrable' because of its thick thorn forests, wandering riverbeds, bothersome mosquitoes and poisonous snakes. Pedro and his companion left Bahá'í literature along the way with those in the Toba settlements and with the white criollos who offered them water and kindness during their tortuous and wearisome journey.

Pedro served for a number of years as chairman of the Regional Teaching Committee and attended many Bahá'í conferences including the International Music Festival held in Rosario del Tala, Entre Rios, Argentina, in 1973 where he presented his Toba rendition of the Spanish hymn El es el Rey de los Reyes. He is also the author of a rendering, in the musical style and language of his people, of a portion of the Tablet of Ahmad as well as chants of the Greatest Name in Arabic, Spanish and Toba. He loved singing devotional music and possessed a rich musical voice, a recording of which is still in existence. He was a commanding speaker and often conducted study classes. I remember well an address that he gave in Makalle, his home town, on the subject 'The Kingdom of God on Earth' which he based on the eleven principles enunciated by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in Paris Talks. I was deeply impressed by his grasp of the true significance of the Bahá'í Revelation in relation to the establishment of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh.

Suffering was one of Pedro's constant companions throughout his years as a Bahá'í. Shortly after he accepted the Faith he lost his only infant daughter in an accident. Later on he suffered a paralysis of his lower extremities which he overcame after a long period of convalescence. At times, because of the harsh conditions encountered while travelling to deliver the message, he would experience great pain; nevertheless, he would only comment that whatever befell him was according to the wisdom of God. In the last year of his

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life Pedro and his family moved to the capital of Resistencia province where he hoped to find work that would allow him to travel regularly to surrounding areas on weekends. A local Centre had recently been constructed there and Pedro consented to live in it and extend hospitality to the Bahá'í visitors who

arrived from time to time. He also contributed to the completion of the building. He had just finished repairing the windows and was about to begin constructing a porch when he passed away on 15 December 1980. The municipal employees who attended to the legal formalities asked who was this man — apparently poor and bereft of worldly goods — that so many people should have come to attend his funeral, a Bahá'í service. His fellow believers and Toba brethren wept tears of great sadness at the news of his passing.

One day when Pedro and I were discussing the difficulties some pioneers were having in adapting to their new post, Pedro remarked: 'A pioneer is like a tree which has been transplanted to a new spot in the garden. Before the tree can take root again it must first shed all its old leaves. Only then will the new sprouts be forthcoming. You who are pioneers must pass through the same process. These friends are only shedding their old leaves.'

Now that Pedro himself has shed his earthly form, may God grant that the tree of his eternal being be adorned with fragrant leaves and blossoms in the Kingdom of Abhá. His Bahá'í life was one of truly fruitful service and exemplary steadfastness in the early years of the Cause among the Toba people.

EUGENE DORNBROOK

MANÚCHIHHR HAKÍM

1910-1981

Manúchihr Hakím, son of Dr. Arastú Hakím, was born in Tihrán in 1910. After receiving elementary and secondary education at the Tarbíyat School, he studied medicine in France for the next nine years on a government grant. He completed a course in general medicine and specialized in teaching anatomy. He and his wife, Germaine, were married in 1938; they had two children, Paul and Christine.

Picture in Upper Right Corner with the Caption: Manúchihr Hakím

He returned to Írán, served his term of conscription, and for two years worked at the University of Tihrán where he established a Chair of Anatomy. He returned to Paris where he took his degree at the Medical College and then won the agrégation for professorial rank in the Universities of France. Returning to Írán, he taught in the University of Tihrán for the next thirty years. He was renowned for his researches in anatomy, his discoveries being twice cited in *Le Rouvier*, the standard work on the subject. His writings have become part of the textbooks used in many medical colleges. He was also well-known as a specialist in gastroenterology. In 1976 he was decorated by the French government with the Légion d'honneur for his humanitarian services. At the time of his death, Professor Hakím had retired from the University of Tihrán and had been associated for several years with the work of the medical school of the National University of Írán.

Professor Hakím was no less distinguished in his work for the Bahá'í Faith. Over a long period he was a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Írán, and several times its chairman; he was a member of various

other Bahá'í bodies, as well. He laboured long to extend and organize the facilities of the Bahá'í hospital in Tihrán and was for many years chairman of its Board of Directors.

At about 5.30 p.m. on 12 January 1981 some assailants, posing as patients, gained admittance to Professor Hakím's surgery and shot him dead. The newspapers, aware for the most part that he was killed because he was a Bahá'í, feared to report it. One lone exception was the daily Mizán of Tihrán which mentioned it briefly in its issue of 17 January. The magazine Tib va Dárú, No. 62, 4 February 1981, carried an article by Dr. Shukru'lláh Asadí mentioning Professor Hakím's achievements. This assumes special import by virtue of the fact that the author was fully aware of the reason which brought about the assassination. Shortly after his tragic death, Professor Hakím's residence and its contents were confiscated under a government order issued, significantly, several months prior to this event.

A befitting funeral was given him on 15 January, and at memorial meetings held on 19 and 20 January, warm and endearing tributes were paid to the nobility of his life, a fruitful and honourable life that had been devoted to study and research for the welfare and well-being of all people. There were many in all parts of the country who had such faith in his skill and healing power that they used to speed to him when ailing and return home hale and hearty. More than four thousand Bahá'ís attended the funeral of Professor Hakím. An eyewitness described it as 'a truly great event ... This remarkable gathering had a tremendous effect on the morale of the Bahá'ís as a demonstration of love, unity and the readiness for sacrifice by the beleaguered and oppressed Bahá'í community in the Cradle of the Faith.'

Moving tribute was paid Professor Hakím by his daughter, Christine Samandarí-Hakím, in her book *Les Bahá'ís ou victoire sur la violence* (Lausanne: Editions Pierre Marcel Favre), written shortly after his death. Upon its publication the Universal House of Justice, on 25 March 1982, cabled the National Spiritual Assembly of Switzerland requesting that it relay **LOVING CONGRATULATIONS** to the author on the publication of her **VALUABLE BOOK WHICH WILL ASSUREDLY CAUSE SOULS HER DEAR FATHER AND OTHER MARTYRS REJOICE ABHAKINGDOM.**

(Translated from the Persian by RUSTOM SABIT)

SUBHÍ ELIÁS

1902-1981

The passing of Subhí Eliás on 26 January 1981 in Alexandria, Egypt, after a five-day illness, has ended a period of sixty years of devoted, loving and fruitful service to the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh.

Born to Coptic Christian parents on 17 May 1902 in an obscure village in the heart of the Nile delta, his childhood was marked by extreme hardship. With the premature death of his young father in 1906, the four-year-old Subhí was left

to the care of an ageing, rich and kind yet helpless grandfather. His widowed young mother, who was then pregnant with her second son, Sabrí, was forced to leave her house and return to that of her parents in a nearby village, due to the machinations and unbearable treatment of one of her deceased husband's brothers. Subhí, who was not allowed to move with his mother, received his only tuition at the reading class conducted by the village priest. Bible reading was the only subject taught in these classes held in the village church, with the priest expounding the narrow and literal interpretations which he himself had accepted through a similar education. Subhí, however, had a flexible mentality and was able to investigate truth for himself independently of the traditional process. He recognized the limitation and prejudice of his tutor and observed the fanatical behaviour of high-ranking clergy on their visits to his village. At an early age he displayed courage in rebuking and criticizing them publicly.

In 1911 Subhí was surprised and overwhelmed with joy to discover that he had a brother, when Sabrí was mature enough to be claimed from his mother by the family of his father. The reunited brothers formed a deep attachment which led them ultimately to material success and which was heightened by the spiritual bond that the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh

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Picture in Upper Left Corner with the Caption: Subhí Eliás

provided. Soon after being brought together the young men, again through the plotting of their cruel paternal uncle, were denied any share in the inheritance of their grandfather, were dismissed from their home and driven from their village. Homeless and wretched, the two boys made their own way unaided. They were then attracted to the Bahá'í Faith through the kindness and love of another uncle, the late Ibráhím 'Abdu'l-Masíh, whose sterling character and lofty idealism stood in marked contrast to all they had witnessed. Subhí embraced the Faith in March 1921 and proceeded to attract Sabrí's interest simply by requesting him to carry some Bahá'í books to friends with the purposed order that he was not to read them. It was not long until Sabrí asked his brother how to declare himself a Bahá'í, apologizing for disobeying the instruction that he was not to read the books he had delivered on Subhí's behalf. Subhí's zeal was such that he immediately made it known to his relatives that he was a member of the Bahá'í Faith, ably meeting the opposition they cast up. A few years later the brothers settled in Alexandria where Subhí remained virtually for the rest of his life. In 1934 Sabrí began his service as a pioneer, going first to Ethiopia, and later to a post further afield where he continues his work to this day.

In the early months of his life as a Bahá'í, Subhí yearned to make pilgrimage to the Holy Land and attain the presence of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, but alas his heart's desire was shattered by the passing of the beloved Master. A few years later he corresponded with Shoghi Effendi and received many inspiring replies. He had the privilege of making two pilgrimages and on each occasion

had the bounty of meeting the Guardian. He lovingly cherished these experiences and in the eve of his life would speak tearfully of them to the young Bahá'ís.

Subhí was elected to the first Local Spiritual Assembly of Alexandria, formed in 1924, and served on that body until the disbandment of the Bahá'í administrative institutions in Egypt in 1961. He also served as a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of North East Africa. Characteristic of the early days of the Bahá'í administration in Egypt were the efforts of the believers to grasp the purpose of the New World Order and to witness its divine institutions come into existence. Under the unerring guidance of the beloved Guardian they longed to exercise their sacred responsibilities. They made devoted efforts to achieve recognition of the Faith as an independent religion and to secure the right for Bahá'ís to follow their teachings in matters of personal status. They were inspired and encouraged in taking this course by the historic verdict of the High Muslim Court in 1924 which ruled that the Bahá'í Faith is totally independent from Islám. Subhí's own contribution in those days was considerable. On the death of an infant son in September 1945 he refused to have the child buried in the Coptic or Muslim cemeteries and requested that the authorities allocate a burial ground to the Bahá'ís of Alexandria. Although his request was not granted, from that time onward Bahá'ís were permitted to inter their dead in 'civil' cemeteries which had previously been restricted to non-Egyptian libre penseurs. He raised his six surviving children as devoted and active Bahá'ís, three of whom followed the example of their uncle Sabrí in marrying

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Bahá'ís of Muslim background despite the wrath of fanatical non-Bahá'í relatives. These marriages added lustre to the Bahá'í community as living examples of the capacity of the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh to unite people of different backgrounds.

In 1977, despite failing health, he taped a five-hour recording giving a comprehensive historical account of the development of the Bahá'í Faith in Egypt and, in particular, Alexandria. Quite often, when the Faith was attacked in Egyptian publications, the writers received a spirited reply from Subhí, either published in the same manner, or in the form of a personal letter. His greatest share of service to the Faith took place during the tumultuous, though blessed, decade that followed the proscription of Bahá'í activities in Egypt in 1961. The Bahá'ís were subjected to a series of arrests, trials and sentences of imprisonment, notably in 1965, 1967 and 1972, and Subhí played his full part in these events. In prison he conducted himself in a manner that inspired his Bahá'í fellow captives and filled his awe-stricken captors with perplexity. On two occasions he simply presented himself at police headquarters before the authorities had an opportunity to arrest him at home. Released from prison on bail pending his trial, he would painstakingly compile materials for the use of the non-Bahá'í lawyers who were to defend the Bahá'ís.

He passed on to the Abhá Kingdom without having lived to witness the fulfilment of his heart's desire, the restoration of freedom and recognition to the Bahá'í community of Egypt, which even today is still withheld. His friends there find solace only in remembrance of his great service which was worthy of emulation. 'His passing', his brother wrote to other members of his family, 'has scalded my heart ... He was made homeless in early boyhood, yet he spread a shelter of loving protection over me. To me he was a father and a mother ... Embracing the Faith in his early youth, he remained faithful and stalwart ... Over a period of sixty years the torch of his faith kept burning ... My only refuge is to turn my face towards the Supreme Ruler, that He may bestow on him the best of rewards.'

On 11 February 1981 the following cable was received from the Universal House of Justice:

DEEPLY GRIEVED PASSING VALIANT PROMOTER DEFENDER CAUSE SUBHI ELIAS. HIS DEDICATED SERVICES OVER SEVERAL DECADES LOVINGLY REMEMBERED. ASSURE RELATIVE FRIENDS FERVENT PRAYERS HOLY SHRINES PROGRESS HIS SOUL.

(Compiled from tape-recorded accounts of SUBHÍ and SABRÍ ELIÁS)

HONOR KEMPTON
1892-1981

'How proud I feel of the spirit that so powerfully animates you. My prayers will, I assure you, accompany you on your great and historic adventure. Persevere no matter how great the obstacles in your way. Future generations will glorify your deed and emulate your example.'

No words other than these, written to Honor Kempton on 12 March 1939 by the beloved Guardian, could more adequately pay tribute to the life of this indefatigable servant of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh, the spiritual mother of both Alaska and of Luxembourg.

Born on 30 September 1892 in Maidenhead, England (four months after the passing of Bahá'u'lláh), she was raised by her mother in the spirit of the Anglican Church. During World War I Honor served as a Red Cross volunteer, and became engaged to an American surgeon whom she followed to the United States after the war. She stayed in the Chicago area and, after the death of her fiancé in a car accident, moved to Wilmette to live with an English family. Here she first heard of the Bahá'í Faith and became attracted to its teachings. In 1935 she moved to San Francisco, attended firesides in the home of Leroy and Sylvia Ioas and soon after declared her belief in Bahá'u'lláh. She was elected to the Local Spiritual Assembly and immediately engaged in teaching.

When the Guardian cabled the American Bahá'í community on 26 January 1939 calling for NINE HOLY SOULS to open the remaining virgin territories of North America,¹ Honor

¹ See Shoghi Effendi, *Messages to America*, p. 16. The unsettled territories were Alaska, Delaware, Nevada, South Carolina, Utah, Vermont, West Virginia,

Picture in Upper Left Corner with the Caption: Honor Kempton

immediately responded by volunteering to go to Alaska, a place which at that time some might have deemed not a suitable locality for an unattached woman in her late forties to make her home. In her biographical notes Honor writes, 'I was, however, quite sure that Alaska was the place for me. I felt that the Guardian was speaking to me when he sent that message.' And so Honor set out upon her spiritual odyssey which was to extend throughout six successive international teaching plans given to the Bahá'í world by Shoghi Effendi and the Universal House of Justice, and which was to encompass Alaska and the European continent. Her decision to go to Alaska had come as the result of a mystical experience of great intensity. Anchorage was her chosen goal. Although well-meaning friends diverted her attention to Juneau she was led, again by what she felt to be divine promptings, to settle in Anchorage.

On 18 April 1939 she disembarked at Juneau. She did not find employment there but assisted a new-found friend who operated a bookshop. Two months later she moved to Anchorage and established the town's first bookstore. 'The Book Cache', as she called her shop, was later described by a former Governor of the State as 'the cultural center of Alaska'. After four discouraging months, during which those she contacted appeared to have no real interest in the Bahá'í Faith, Janet Whiteneck (later Stout), a seeker, enrolled — the first person in Alaska to do so during the first Seven Year Plan. Soon other pioneers arrived, new believers were accepted into the community, and in September 1943 the first Local Spiritual Assembly was formed. During World War II Honor became an American citizen and continued to find new ways to spread the news of the coming of Bahá'u'lláh. In exchange for book reviews that she prepared for a radio station she was given an opportunity to present weekly radio broadcasts on the Faith. In 1944 she attended the National Convention in Wilmette as Alaska's first delegate.

In 1946 Honor, who was then in her mid-fifties, proposed settling in Europe. Shoghi Effendi approved the suggestion provided her departure from Alaska would not in any way affect the stability of the Cause there. After an extensive teaching trip in England, undertaken with the encouragement of the Guardian, and a visit to her family, she arrived in February 1947 in Luxembourg, the smallest of the ten goal countries still unopened to the Faith in the second Seven Year Plan. Soon joined by other pioneers, she witnessed the declaration of faith of the first Luxembourg believer in December 1947. Until her departure, shortly before the formation of the first Local Spiritual Assembly in Luxembourg, Honor remained the focal centre of the many teaching and deepening activities initiated by the small group of believers there.

In January 1949 she moved to Geneva, Switzerland, to serve as the representative of the European Teaching Committee at the International Bahá'í Bureau. In her new function she helped to organize the annual European Teaching

Conferences, including the International Teaching Conference held in Stockholm in 1953 which launched the Ten Year Crusade in that continent. She maintained a constant correspondence with the World Centre, and with pioneers, new believers and young Local Spiritual Assemblies through-

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out Europe, and received many travelling teachers and other visitors, amongst whom were almost all the Hands of the Cause. She also served as a member of the Italo-Swiss Regional National Spiritual Assembly.

When the International Bureau was closed in 1957, Honor opened to the Faith several goal cities in France, including Lille and Nancy. After a visit to England, where her mother declared her belief in Bahá'u'lláh at age ninety-nine, the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States asked Honor if she would be willing to devote the remainder of her life to pioneering, no matter where. Readily consenting, she was asked to return to Luxembourg. Thus, in 1959, in her sixty-sixth year, she began to add the final laurels to a life already crowned by achievements. She opened to the Faith the industrial south and the agricultural north of Luxembourg, leaving behind her flourishing communities in Esch-sur-Alzette and Ettelbrueck. During this time she served on the Regional Spiritual Assembly of the Benelux countries. In 1963, as a delegate from Luxembourg, she attended the International Bahá'í Convention in Haifa for the election of the first Universal House of Justice.

She moved to Kopstal-Bridel in 1973 and lived with Miss Suzette Hipp, the first Luxembourg believer, a move which enabled the last Local Spiritual Assembly of the Nine Year Plan in that country to be formed. In addition to serving on the Local Spiritual Assembly she continued to teach, to pray for new souls to discover the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh, to deepen and encourage her fellow believers, to correspond with old and new friends in Alaska and Europe, to make plans to open yet other localities in Luxembourg, and to serve on national committees. In 1976 she made a short visit to Alaska where she attended the International Conference in Anchorage and made a trip to Barrow, the Eskimo community dear to her heart.

Although physically weakened through advanced age and failing health she remained spiritually active until her last breath, thus dying in 'battle dress' as she had always wished to do. At her passing on 24 February 1981 the National Spiritual Assembly of Luxembourg, deploring the loss of this 'dearly beloved, much admired' believer, reported that 'until her last moment she was eager to hear of the progress of her beloved Faith and to give her part to its development ... Her unfailing fervour, her complete dedication and steadfast service', the National Assembly averred, 'will remain a shining example to all believers.'

On 27 February the Universal House of Justice sent the following cable to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States:

ASCENSION ABHA KINGDOM OUTSTANDING DEARLY LOVED MAIDSERVANT BAHAUULLAH HON

KEMPTON IN HER NINETIETH YEAR AND AT FINAL PIONEER POST KOPSTAL LUXEMBOURG TERMINATES FORTY FIVE YEARS DEDICATED SERVICE CAUSE GOD. RESPONDING IMMEDIATELY BELOVED GUARDIANS CALL IN 1939 FOR NINE HOLY SOULS TO OPEN REMAINING VIRGIN AREAS NORTH AMERICA SHE PIONEERED TO ALASKA BECAME MOTHER THAT FLOURISHING COMMUNITY. IN 1947 SHE BECAME FIRST PIONEER TO GRAND DUCHY LUXEMBOURG AND FOR REST OF HER LIFE SERVED WITH GREAT DISTINCTION IN EUROPEAN CONTINENT ULTIMATELY SETTLING LUXEMBOURG AND RECOGNIZED MOTHER THAT COMMUNITY. HER LIFE STEADFAST DEDICATION CONSTITUTES BRILLIANT EPISODE EARLY YEARS FORMATIVE AGE FAITH. ADVISE HOLD MEMORIAL SERVICE MOTHER TEMPLE WEST BEFITTING TRIBUTE SERVANT BLESSED BEAUTY WHOSE SHINING RECORD EMBLAZONED ANNALS AMERICAN BAHAI COMMUNITY OFFERING ARDENT PRAYERS SACRED THRESHOLD BOUNTIFUL REWARD PROGRESS SOUL ABHA KINGDOM.

To the National Spiritual Assembly of Luxembourg on 26 February the Universal House of Justice cabled:

PASSING OUTSTANDING MAIDSERVANT BAHAUULLAH HONOR KEMPTON SEVERS ONE MORE LINK IN HISTORIC PERIOD IMPLEMENTATION BELOVED MASTERS DIVINE PLAN CONTINENTAL EUROPE HER OUTSTANDING SERVICES THAT CONTINENT AND ALASKA CONSTITUTE BRILLIANT EPISODE SHED LUSTRE ANNALS FORMATIVE AGE FAITH. REQUESTING NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY UNITED STATES HOLD MEMORIAL GATHERING MOTHER TEMPLE WEST. ADVISE HOLD BEFITTING MEMORIAL MEETINGS ALL BAHAI COMMUNITIES GRAND DUCHY. ASSURE ARDENT PRAYERS BOUNTIFUL REWARD PROGRESS SOUL ABHA KINGDOM.

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(Based on tributes received from the National Spiritual Assemblies of Alaska and Luxembourg)

MUHAMMAD LABÍB
1893-1981

Picture in Lower Left Corner with the Caption: Muhammad Labíb

Muhammad Labíb was born in about 1893 in Yazd. His father, Muhammad-Husayn Ulfat (known as 'Attár), had been a prominent Shaykhí of Yazd prior to his conversion to the Bahá'í Faith, and when the populace of that town rose up against the Bahá'ís in 1903, in one of the most savage attacks that the Bahá'ís of Írán have experienced, he was among the prime targets of the mob. Mr. Labíb's father was expelled from Yazd and his shop and home were ransacked and demolished in the early days of the upheaval, while his mother was set upon by a throng, beaten to the point of death, and then thrown into a dark, damp dungeon for three days. Mr. Labíb himself, then aged nine, spent several days in the underground canals that bring water to Yazd, seated on the shoulders of his elder brother, until they found refuge in the cellar of the house of one of the Bahá'ís. Unable to remain in Yazd, the family moved in 1905 to Tihrán where Mr. Labíb attended the Bahá'í Tarbíyat School.

From 1914 Mr. Labíb took a strong interest in Esperanto, and the following year when he moved to Qazvín to teach at the Bahá'í Tavakkul School he initiated Esperanto lessons and became the official representative of the World

Esperanto movement. In 1916, while he was in Qazvín, he had the idea of establishing a trust fund called the Nawnahálán Company in which the Bahá'í children who attended his school could save their money. In 1919 Mr. Labíb and his father were on pilgrimage in Haifa for sixty days. During this time Mr. Labíb presented his idea of the Nawnahálán to 'Abdu'l-Bahá Who gave His blessing and endorsement to these plans and even contributed two gold coins as His 'share' in the company.

Mr. Labíb was a keen photographer and often in the course of teaching trips and on other occasions he took many photographs of great historical importance for the Bahá'í Faith. He accompanied Effie Baker¹ in 1930-1931 when, at the request of Shoghi Effendi, she toured Írán taking photographs for his translation of *The Dawn-Breakers*. Mr. Labíb crowned a life of service to the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh by pioneering in 1955 to Hiroshima, Japan, and to other parts of the Far East where he remained for nine years, and in 1963 to Rhodes in the Mediterranean.

Towards the end of his life he wrote his memoirs as well as a large number of works dealing with episodes in Bahá'í history. These are rendered all the more valuable because they are profusely illustrated with his photographs. One of his books, *The Seven Martyrs of Hurmazak*, has been translated into English and published;² the rest remain for the future. Although blind and physically infirm in the last years of his life, he retained an active mind until his passing on 14 March 1981

SADDENED NEWS PASSING DEVOTED SERVANT

1 See 'In Memoriam', *The Bahá'í World*, vol. XIV, p. 320.

2 *The Seven Martyrs of Hurmazak*, trans. M. Momen, George Ronald, Oxford, 1981.

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SACRED THRESHOLD MUHAMMAD LABIB. HIS DEDICATED LONGSTANDING RECORD SERVICES IRAN REMEMBERED WITH DEEP LOVE APPRECIATION. ASSURE RELATIVES FERVENTLY PRAYING SHRINES PROGRESS HIS SOUL ABHA KINGDOM.
MOOJAN MOMEN

RIDVANIYYIH SULEIMANI

(RIDVÁNIYYIH SULAMÁNÍ)

1904-1981

DEEPLY GRIEVED PASSING HANDMAID BAHAUULLAH VALIANT PROMOTER FAITH RIDVANIYYIH SULEMANI. STEADFASTNESS DEDICATION WITH WHICH SHE OFFERED SERVICES PIONEERING FIELD LOVINGLY REMEMBERED. ASSURE DEAR HUSBAND FRIENDS FERVENT PRAYERS HOLY SHRINES PROGRESS HER SOUL ABHA KINGDOM.

Universal House of Justice, 19 March 1981

Ridvaniyyih (Ouskouli) Suleimani was born to Bahá'í parents on 25 April 1904 in Ishqábád, Russia, the first of four daughters and a son born to Zahra and Husayn Ouskouli. Both her parents were from Írán, and the devotion and

enthusiasm with which they served the Bahá'í Faith was to ignite in Ridvaniyyih's heart a flame that never lessened and that was to warm all with whom she came in contact. When Ridvaniyyih was fifteen her mother passed away leaving her to help care for her siblings with a joy and generous giving of self that was for six decades to characterize the hospitality she lavished upon all who entered her home. At eighteen she married Suleiman 'Alí Muhammad Suleimani Milani in Ishqábád where they remained for a year.

In 1923 Mr. Ouskouli and Mr. and Mrs. Suleimani made their great journey to the East to pioneer in China, a land which 'Abdu'l-Bahá longed to visit. They settled in Shanghai and were soon blessed with a visit from Martha Root who was making the first of her four trips to China. During their many years in mainland China Mr. Ouskouli and Mr. and Mrs. Suleimani made every effort to teach the Faith to the Chinese people, a race whom the Master described as 'most simple-hearted and truth-seeking'. Through all the wars and conflicts that raged about them, these lovers of the Blessed Perfection shared His healing, peace-bringing Message with everyone they met. In August 1950 Mr. and Mrs. Suleimani reluctantly left Shanghai because of disturbed conditions. Her father, although isolated and in his late seventies, decided to remain behind, to continue holding aloft the Light in the darkness around him. In various letters written on behalf of the Guardian, or in postscripts in his own hand, Shoghi Effendi made it clear how deeply he appreciated Mr. Ouskouli's remaining in Shanghai, an act to which he attached 'the greatest importance'.

In 1952 the Suleimanis made their pilgrimage and had the inestimable privilege of being in the Guardian's presence. Shoghi Effendi showered them with loving kindness, mentioned their services in China and expressed his hope that, if possible, they would be able to return there. He assured them that that vast land would witness the raising of the Banner of Bahá'u'lláh. After that never-to-be-forgotten sojourn, they returned to Írán and on 30 August 1954 they set sail from Írán for Taiwan, where they disembarked at the port of Keelung on 22 October and joyously cabled Shoghi Effendi news of their arrival. The beloved Guardian cabled back, assuring them of his loving prayers. They were the first pioneers to settle in Taiwan. They made their home in Tainan, on the western coast of the island, facing mainland China. When they first arrived there were only ten Chinese believers. On the eve of their first Naw-Rúz in Taiwan four friends became Bahá'ís, the first of many who were led to the Faith through the humble and persistent efforts of Ridvaniyyih and her husband. At Ridván 1955 the Hands of the Cause residing in the Holy Land wrote that 'The wonderful news of the progress of the Cause in Formosa brought great joy to his [the Guardian's] heart'.

By Ridván 1956, through their untiring efforts, the Suleimanis were able to witness the formation, in Tainan, of the first Local Spiritual Assembly of Taiwan. Through his secretary the Guardian expressed his pleasure at this victory, remarking on its historic importance, and stating that 'it is the first of the universal institutions of the Faith to be established in that unique and promising

Picture in Upper Left Corner with the Caption: Ridvaniyyih Suleimani

country. It is the center of the spiritual gifts which must now come to the people of the area.' In November 1956 the Suleimanis hosted the first All-Taiwan Teaching Conference in their home which was attended by the Hand of the Cause of God Agnes Alexander and forty other Bahá'ís. This had been preceded just a couple of months before by Taiwan's first summer school, also held in Tainan.

In 1958 the Suleimanis purchased land and constructed a beautiful Bahá'í Center in Tainan — Taiwan's first — located in an attractive area near an important national university. In October the following year, during the third Taiwan summer school, the Center was dedicated. Later, through their loving efforts, the Local Spiritual Assembly of Tainan was incorporated, and Ridvaniyyih and her husband then legally transferred the ownership to the Local Assembly as a donation. It was the first property belonging to the Faith in Taiwan, and the Suleimanis humbly offered to be its caretakers. In the years that followed, the Center, with the Suleimanis as gracious hosts, was blessed with the visits of many of the Hands of the Cause, Bahá'í travelling teachers and other friends from around the world. No guest of Mrs. Suleimani's can ever forget her warm embrace, her enthusiastic greeting, her hurried footsteps as she brought a continuous flow of delicious homemade refreshments, the sumptuous meals that she seemed to create in no time at all. She would always inquire, with what one knew to be genuine concern, about one's health, about one's family and about the progress of the Faith in one's home area, the good news of which always brought her much joy. It was always a pleasure to talk with her, for she was quick-witted, full of humor and forbearing. Even in her seventies she would always try to journey to meet newly-arrived pioneers, bringing for them a homemade cake and plants from her garden. It was only in the last couple of years of her life that a debilitating skin disorder which doctors could neither diagnose nor cure forced Mrs. Suleimani to stop her constant travels around Taiwan, journeys she made as a member of the Auxiliary Board or as a member of the National Spiritual Assembly. In addition to serving on the Local Spiritual Assembly of Tainan from the time of its formation in 1956 until her passing nearly a quarter of a century later, Mrs. Suleimani also served as a member of Taiwan's National Spiritual Assembly from its formation in 1967 through 1970, and again from 1973 through 1977. In 1978 she attended the International Convention for the election of the Universal House of Justice and had the bounty of being selected as one of the tellers; in her diary she commented that the wonderful task took all night.

As her illness grew worse Mrs. Suleimani suffered great pain, but would never let one know of it. After serving others for so many years it was a true sacrifice for her to allow others to try to serve her. At last, in the early morning hours of 18 March 1981, she left behind her small, bent, frail body. She was buried on the eve of Naw-Rúz on the crest of a hill overlooking a lake in Tainan county. Her resting-place is the first Bahá'í cemetery of Taiwan.

She faces West towards the Qiblah. Between her grave and the Holy Land stretches the vast expanse of China, her adopted home, the pioneering post where two generations of her family have achieved their desire of burying their bones. We know that for generations to come the memory of Husayn Ouskouli and

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of his daughter, Ridvaniyyih Suleimani, will be honored, as the Chinese people reflect on the lives of these valiant souls who brought to their land the Light of Bahá'u'lláh, in obedient response to the Master's call: China, China, China-ward the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh must march. Where is that holy, sanctified Bahá'í to become the teacher of China! ... He must entertain no thought of his own but ever think of their spiritual welfare. In China one can teach many souls and train and educate such divine personages that each one of them may become the bright candle of the world of humanity ... Had I been feeling well I would have taken a journey to China myself ... China is the country of the future. I hope the right kind of teacher will be inspired to go to that vast empire to lay the foundation of the Kingdom of God, to promote the principles of divine civilization, to unfurl the banner of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh and to invite the people to the banquet of the Lord!1 DALE ENG

SEWOOSUMBUR JEEHOBA APPA

1912-1981

DEEPLY GREIVED PASSING SEWOOSUMBUR JEEHOBA APPA. HIS UNSTINTING OUTPOURING OF SELFLESS SERVICE TO GODS CAUSE EVER SINCE HE EMBRACED ITS LIGHT HIS DEDICATED PARTICIPATION IN ACTIVITIES INSTITUTIONS FAITH CULMINATING IN HIS MEMBERSHIP BOARD COUNSELLORS LOVINGLY REMEMBERED BY HIS COWORKERS SOUTHERN AFRICA PARTICULARLY ISLANDS INDIAN OCEAN. ADVISE COMMUNITIES INDIAN OCEAN HOLD MEMORIAL GATHERINGS IN HONOUR HIS DEVOTED LABOURS PROMOTION CAUSE. PRAYING HIS SHRINES PROGRESS HIS SOUL ABHA KINGDOM. CONVEY LOVING SYMPATHY MEMBERS BEREAVED FAMILY.

Universal House of Justice

'Papa Appa', as he was affectionately called by Bahá'í friends, young and old, both in his native Mauritius and in some African countries, was the fifth child in a family of six children. The family was of modest means and his education did not extend beyond the primary classes. His father died at an early age, so part of the responsibility for the household soon fell upon his youthful shoulders. He started a teaching career as a fourth class teacher in the same school he had attended as a child, not suspecting that later in life he would be called by Bahá'u'lláh to be a teacher of His Message. Many of his former students who attended his funeral still remembered their former teacher, Mr. Appa, describing him as the man with the smiling face whom everybody loved. He was really a very kind and lovable teacher and a good man; I was myself a pupil in the school in which he taught and, though not in his class, I remember how my classmates and I wished to have him as our teacher.

Picture in Upper Right Corner with the Caption: Seewoosumbur Jeehoba Appa

Mr. Appa's first contact with the Bahá'í Faith was in 1956. He was a pure-hearted man and it was not difficult for the light of the Revelation of God to reflect in his heart once it reached there. He immediately began a life of service. His home soon became the centre of many activities and he was happy only

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when he was able to make teaching trips almost every day. He came from an orthodox Hindu background and his family and friends did not approve of his accepting the Bahá'í Faith and engaging in service to it. Despite the racial and religious prejudices he encountered, his faith was strong enough to withstand the opposition and pressures exerted by his relatives and friends. Eventually they grew to respect him and the Faith he had espoused. He served unwaveringly and faithfully until his last breath, dying as he would have wished 'with his boots on'. The day on which Mr. Appa winged his flight to the Abhá Kingdom was the day he had chosen to host a dinner and devotional gathering in his home. Although he had not felt well in the morning he would not cancel the meeting. During the prayers he suffered an acute pain in his chest and was immediately taken to a nearby hospital where he quietly passed away within a few hours.

The news of his death on 28 March 1981 was a great shock to his many friends who had never once heard him complain. The Bahá'ís throughout the islands of the Indian Ocean, in Africa and beyond lost a kind, gentle and loving father, for the love that flowed from his heart for everybody was that of a caring parent. His life was an example of real Bahá'í life. He was hardworking, conscientious and orderly, and always ready to accompany a Bahá'í friend anywhere for the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh. He not only read a great deal but frequently jotted down important extracts for others to profit by. His home was a true centre of attraction: his obvious joy in greeting friends at his door and his 'Oh!' of welcome would go straight to the heart. He was a child with the children, a young man with the youth, and an adult with his peers; but all who came in contact with him felt a warm, genuine fatherly affection. His name 'Appa' had the same sweetness as 'Papa' to me, and surely to many others who knew him closely. It was the Hand of the Cause John Robarts who first called him 'Papa Appa' years ago at a meeting in Vacoas, and use of the appellation was adopted by many of the friends. DEEPEST SYMPATHY FAMILY YOUR GREAT LOSS, Mr. Robarts and his wife, Audrey, cabled, UNFORGETTABLE MEMORIES DEAR PAPA APPA HIS LONG SERVICE . . .

Papa Appa's service in the Faith of God was long indeed. He served on the first Local Spiritual Assembly of his home community of Vacoas. When the National Spiritual Assembly of the Indian Ocean came into being in 1964 he served as its treasurer. Later that year he was appointed a member of the Auxiliary Board for the Indian Ocean region and in 1968 was appointed a member of the first Continental Board of Counsellors for the zone of Southern Africa. Over the years, even when his health was failing, he travelled for the Faith to many African countries and islands of the Indian Ocean and traversed on foot rough,

hilly roads and paths. His last journey outside Mauritius was in 1981 when he accompanied Counsellor Shídán Fath-i-A'zam to Madagascar. Mr. Appa rejoiced when he found that the Bahá'í friends grasped the importance of love and unity as essential prerequisites for true and productive service to the Faith, and he constantly strove to help the friends achieve this understanding. In whatever function he was called to serve he did so with modesty, zeal, enthusiasm and thoroughness. His sole concern to the very last was to see the Faith progressing and the friends living in accordance with its laws and teachings. Unquestioning obedience — to the Revealed Word and to the instructions of the beloved Guardian and the Universal House of Justice — was the hallmark of his life and the message he always tried to convey in the important functions he was called to perform. His firmness in the Covenant, as exemplified by his ceaseless service to the Cause and his strong love for his fellow believers, is a source of inspiration to all.

The Counsellors who had known and worked with him cabled on 31 March 1981: OUR HEARTS BROKEN SAD NEWS PAPA APPA. WE LOST LOVING FATHER OUTSTANDING PROMOTER FAITH IRREPLACABLE FRIEND . . .

Beautiful tributes were received from many administrative institutions and individuals. From South Africa the Hand of the Cause William Sears and his wife, Marguerite, deplored the passing of a DEARLY-LOVED FRIEND, OUTSTANDING TEACHER, STEADFAST HERO. REJOICE MANY HAPPY YEARS WE SERVED TOGETHER. EVERYONE REMEMBERING HIS FRUITFUL LIFE WITH LOVING PRAYERS . . . Co-signers of the cable were Michael Sears, Chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Republic of South Africa and his wife, Ruth, a member of the

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Auxiliary Board. The Bahá'ís of Swaziland, through their National Spiritual Assembly, sent a letter of condolence to the family of Mr. Appa and to the believers of Mauritius. The concluding sentence of that letter expresses beautifully the conviction shared by all who knew 'Papa Appa' : 'As we pray for the progress of his soul, we in turn are confident of his assistance in our efforts to spread the Teachings of the Faith he so dearly loved.'

S. MOOTEN

FRANCES BEARD

1921-1981

DEEPLY GRIEVED PASSING DISTINGUISHED SERVANT BAHULLAH FRANCES BEARD. HER OUTSTANDING SERVICES UGANDA MALAWI ENRICH ANNALS IRISH BAHAI HISTORY. ADVISE HOLD MEMORIAL MEETING HAZIRATULQUDS. ASSURE ARDENT PRAYERS PROGRESS HER SOUL ABHA KINGDOM. CONVEY LOVING SYMPATHY RELATIVES FRIENDS.

Universal House of Justice

Many members of the Irish Bahá'í community knew Frances as that 'phenomenal worker' who used to burn the midnight oil for the Faith in the struggling community of Dublin. She became a Bahá'í in 1960, entering a diminutive community in Dublin; there were only one or two believers in the whole of the

rest of the Republic in those days. The obstacles to Frances's entry into the Faith were tremendous. She was at that time separated from her husband, from whom she was later divorced, and was endeavouring to raise two young daughters alone; and her family background, like that of the Hand of the Cause George Townshend, was deeply rooted in the Church of Ireland. Any departure from her traditional religious and social background was bound to weaken support for her from these established, valuable sources during a most difficult period. Yet she braved this, and more, for when the call was raised for overseas pioneers in 1964 she responded and set off with her young family to assist with the teaching work in Africa.

Picture in the Upper Right Corner with the Caption: Frances Beard

The National Spiritual Assembly of Uganda was formed in the very year she arrived in the country. The importance of her contribution to the teaching and administrative work there can never be overestimated and the radiant cheerfulness with which she performed her service will stand as an inspiration to all aspiring overseas pioneers. The time Frances spent in Uganda made a deep impression upon her as became obvious when she returned to Ireland in 1972. Clearly her experience with the African friends had deepened her own intrinsic qualities of patience, humility, love for every individual in the community and respect for the opinion of each member. She felt that we in Ireland had much to learn from the example of the young community of Uganda and never tired of presenting appropriate examples always prefaced with the remark which we came to anticipate with delight, 'Well, in Uganda we always used to ... '

With the formation of the National Spiritual Assembly of Ireland in 1972, once again Frances's excellent secretarial and executive skills were brought into play. She was a

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founding member of the National Book and Sales Committee and was subsequently appointed to the National Teaching Committee. She took her responsibilities most seriously and rendered extremely valuable work to the community, particularly through the latter committee. She also played a major role in the production of the news organ which came in time to be named *New Day*. Such service, however, lacked the challenge that Frances's spirit sought; increasingly she longed to return to Africa, the continent to which she had developed a considerable attachment. In 1974 she settled in Malawi. Her friends in Ireland looked forward to her cheerful, newsladen letters describing the progress of the Cause there. Invariably her letters contained anecdotes relating to her life in her new home, and the lives of others of the pioneers. Her service in Malawi was suddenly cut short. She was overtaken by a serious illness which necessitated her return to London and eventually, in 1977, to her home in Ireland. The year after her return she was elected to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Republic of Ireland. In addition to the normal work of the National Assembly she provided invaluable assistance in the secretariat and in relation to the administration of property. To the local community of

Dublin she was a valuable and dedicated worker, serving during the last years of her life as an eager and efficient Local Spiritual Assembly secretary. Frances Beard died 'in harness' as a member of the National Assembly. One of my clearest memories of her at this time is of her presence at a meeting of the Assembly some months before her death, smiling, sharing jokes, enquiring about the teaching work and our own personal circumstances — always positive, always keen, mortally ill though she certainly was.

Frances was a warm and sympathetic friend and we are the poorer for her passing. She always asked with genuine interest after one's health, family, and activities, and was always sincere. She was a true friend and true servant. She came into the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh as a mature adult and gave the remaining half of her adult life to its service. Her unique life, embracing as it does service in two African countries and membership on the infant Irish National Assembly, is an indelible example for those who seek to play a part in the fulfilment of the high destiny won by our forebears in the Bahá'í community of the British Isles during the ministry of Shoghi Effendi.

JOE WATSON

MARGARET ROWLING

1897-1981

Margaret Rowling, a devoted handmaiden of Bahá'u'lláh whose service to the Faith extended over more than forty years, was one of three who joined the Faith in Sydney, Australia, in 1938 when there were only fifteen members in the community. Margaret held a job in the Public Service of New South Wales which for some years kept her in Sydney where she took an active part in local Bahá'í affairs.

In 1953 she attended the Intercontinental Conference in India and there determined to respond to the call for pioneers to the Pacific areas. After returning to Australia she worked enthusiastically on the committee concerned with obtaining information about the islands of the Pacific and when she retired from her employment in 1954 at the age of fifty-five she left for Noumea as a pioneer.

A detailed listing of Margaret's itinerary over the years of her faithful and loving service in the Pacific area would require extensive research. In the period between 1956 and 1975 she was almost constantly in motion, her travels taking her to Samoa, Tonga, Tahiti, New Caledonia, Noumea and the Cook Islands. In 1957 she was appointed a member of the Auxiliary Board for Protection and in 1963 was elected to the Regional Spiritual Assembly of the South Pacific.

It was on her return to Australia from the 1953 conference in India that Margaret began her study of the French language as a preparation for her pioneering work in the Pacific. Her long service in the French-speaking islands was invaluable; she made many friends and was highly thought of. For several years, while serving as secretary of the New Caledonian Assembly, she was the only member who could speak both English and French. One ever-recurring problem

during her time in the Pacific was the need to move constantly

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Picture in Upper Left Corner with the Caption: Margaret Rowling

because a visa for a French area was granted for six months only.

In 1967, after attending the convention in Noumea, she came to Sydney in October for the Intercontinental Conference. In 1971 she visited Suva and other Fijian Bahá'í communities, attending the Oceanic Conference in May of that year. In the 1970s Margaret spent much of her time in Sydney, for her health was failing and she had to undergo operations on her eyes; however, she visited Fiji again in September 1974 and March 1975.

Following her retirement Margaret was free to give her full attention and time to the service of Bahá'u'lláh and for nearly twenty years she travelled as a Bahá'í teacher. Her work was concentrated mainly in Fiji, New Caledonia and the New Hebrides. In terms of Pacific Island travel she was unrivalled. She was eloquent, direct in her manner, persevering and self-effacing. Her mode of life, involving constant travel, was frugal and there was great simplicity in the requirements of her daily life. Her unassuming attitude towards life, combined with her other qualities, gave her a dignity which attracted many seeking souls to the Faith.

During her years of failing health in Sydney Margaret often spoke of her wish to return to her beloved island friends. Shortly before her passing on 28 April 1981 the Sydney friends received a telephone enquiry from Noumea: a New Caledonian believer was anxiously enquiring about the well-being of his Bahá'í teacher, Margaret, whom he wished to see once again. Learning that she was very ill, he came at once to Sydney and was deeply touched that despite her weakness and loss of memory she recognized him and spoke his name.

In a memorial service held in her honour at the Mother Temple of the Antipodes on 22 August 1981 Words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá were read whose reality Margaret Rowling had exemplified: May they arise to serve Thee and dedicate themselves to the Kingdom of Thy divinity ... and spread far and wide Thy signs ... may they spread wide the pinions of unity and by their aid soar upward to the Kingdom of Thy singleness to become servants whom the Supreme Concourse will applaud, whose praises the dwellers in Thine all-glorious realm will utter ...

1

(Based on a memoir by MERLE and JAMES HEGGIE)

YADU'LLÁH VAHDAT

1910-1981

Yadu'lláh Vahdat, son of Mukhtár, a veteran believer of Ishtihárd, could trace his ancestry back to Shaykh Abú-Turáb Ishtihárdí who, as mentioned in The Dawn-breakers, 'was responsible for such behaviour ... as to cause him to suffer imprisonment in Tihrán, in the same dungeon within which Bahá'u'lláh was confined' and who 'remained steadfast to the very end, and crowned a life

of loving sacrifice with the glory of martyrdom'.² Yadu'lláh's schooling began under a local tutor but, on his elder brother's advice, he moved to Tihrán and enrolled in the Tarbíyat School where he passed the elementary and secondary grades.

1 Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, pp. 5-6.

2 pp. 39-40.

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Drawn to the army, he entered the military academy and emerged as a second lieutenant.

He married his cousin, Qudsíyyih; the flame of their affection for each other remained undimmed right to the end. She is serving a life sentence in an 'Ádil-Ábád prison today. She is not a young woman, is in ill health and is partially paralysed. The couple had four children, all active in the Cause. The youngest daughter, Mahvash, who was in Shíráz throughout the entire period of the recent convulsion, visited her parents in jail four times a week and was herself imprisoned during the last nine days of her father's life — a circumstance which made it possible for her to see him just before he was killed. She was called by her father 'the fearless lioness in the field of service'.

When Yadu'lláh was to be led to the place of execution, he expressed the wish to bid his wife and daughter goodbye. In spite of an official ban, the guards conducted his daughter to him and she threw herself into his arms, sobbing and weeping grievously. He comforted her, bade her be composed and brave and tend her mother which, when she calmed down, she promised to do. Yadu'lláh next proceeded to his wife's cell and the same scene was re-enacted there with her promising to take care of their daughter when he had gone. 'Bear constantly in mind,' he assured her, 'that I am a soldier in Bahá'u'lláh's army and as such must needs lay down my life for His Cause. Be not perturbed, therefore, at the fate that awaits me; rejoice, rather, that so supreme a bounty has been accorded me. Be steadfast and patient under all conditions and never, ever bow down to these guards or seek any help from them.' As he was being taken to the scene of his martyrdom Yadu'lláh exclaimed, 'It is I who am going towards the bullet, not the bullet towards me!'

Picture in Lower Left Corner with the Caption: Yadu'lláh Vahdat

When he received his commission, Yadu'lláh was posted to Adhirbáyján and chose Salmás as the base of operations for his military service and his Bahá'í activities, in both of which he was highly successful. Later he returned to Tihrán with the rank of captain. After a while he was stationed at Shíráz where he seized the chance, when on official tours, to promote the Cause. He went on pilgrimage at this time and met the beloved Guardian who advised him to remain in Shíráz, to protect the Bahá'ís there, to be brave and to repose full trust in Bahá'u'lláh. The Guardian graciously designated him as the 'shield of the Faith' in that region. So it was that he made

Shíráz his permanent home and was active there until the baleful year 1955 when he planned to go on pilgrimage once again. He applied for leave to do so but the commanding officer, Major-General Bámánqílích,¹ turned down his request and wrathfully threatened to place him on the retired list. Yádu'lláh responded that as a Bahá'í he would readily accept whatever the authorities decreed. He was, thereupon, retired with the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel. Now he was free, at last, to serve the Cause full time, and was appointed an Auxiliary Board member.

On 27 February 1981 Yádu'lláh Vahdat and his wife, a member of the Local Spiritual Assembly of Shíráz, were arrested and confined within the compass of the Hazíratu'l-Quds of Shíráz. After a preliminary examination he was included in a group of nine persons who

¹ See *The Bahá'í World*, vol. XIII, p. 294.

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were assured freedom upon delivery of the effects of the House of the Báb in Shíráz. This promise was not kept, however, and they were transferred to a prison in 'Ádil-Ábád. After a period of suspense and unease, five of them were executed, of whom three were not only refused the fundamental human right of meeting their loved ones before execution but were denied a decent burial, armed guards being posted to ensure that appropriate internment could not take place.

In the diary of a fellow prisoner, Yádu'lláh had written: 'What memories flood my mind! The recollection of the divine bounty that surrounds and confirms the friends and adorns them with the mantle of a saintly character and goodly attributes and enables them to introduce the Faith to those around them in prison; the spirit of love and friendship which prevails among the loved ones and evokes the envy and jealousy of others; the prayers and invocations which ascend from our hearts by day and by night; the tears we shed as we remember the divine grace so profusely showered upon us undeserving ones; the vision of the glorious crown placed on our heads — a crown which our offspring shall cherish with pride and honour ... The life and actions of a Bahá'í do not revert to him alone; their reverberations affect the entire Bahá'í world.'

In a letter dated 14 February 1981 written to a friend by Mr. Vahdat from 'Ádil-Ábád prison shortly before his martyrdom he stated, in part:

'My dear and precious brother. It has been a long time since I have had the opportunity and honour of writing to you. I am sure that the beloved of God, wherever they are, are supporting these prisoners and wronged ones. We are all certain that the friends all over the world are clinging to the hem of the robe of the Blessed Beauty, praying for us.

'Today marks the ninth month of our imprisonment ...

'My trial took place three days ago, from 8-10 February 1981. Each day the trial lasted for five gruelling hours. I have been accused of being a spy for

Israel and the focal point of relationships with Zionism, corrupt on earth, etc. I lay all my affairs in the hands of God. The very first day I came to this prison, I happily accepted everything that was happening to me in the path of Bahá'u'lláh ...

'My dear friend, I know how much you and the other friends outside prison are worrying about us. I know that your suffering is not less than ours, but my beloved, I am over seventy-one years old and have already lived longer than the other men in our family. Suppose God — exalted be His Name! — grants me through His Grace four or five more years? What would that matter? Old age is often more of a burden than a comfort; therefore, wouldn't it be wonderful if my blood were worthy to be shed in the path of His Faith? Would it be better if I took my last breath in comfortable bed? God forbid! I should not say what is to my liking. Whatever is the Will of God, I accept with humility and gratitude.

'You have sent a message that the Bahá'ís are grateful to the prisoners in Írán, that by accepting hardships and imprisonment in the path of God, the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh has been strengthened beyond our imagination. You have said this, my dear friend; therefore, why worry about a few months of imprisonment which has bestowed such honour upon us. If it has spread the fame of the Cause, it is my dearest wish that I remain in prison the rest of my life ...'

Yadu'lláh's last message before his execution on 30 April 1981 said: 'Convey my greetings to all the friends and assure them that whatever befalls us is through the will of God and that whatsoever Bahá'u'lláh decrees will surely come to pass.'

Mrs. Qudsíyyih Vahdat writing from prison on 12 October 1981, stated: 'My husband had no greater wish than to sacrifice himself in the path of God, but for me who was privileged to spend forty-five years of life with him, each year brimming with love, to be separated from him is very difficult. My consolation is that he has attained his destiny; well is it with him. I wish you to know with what happiness he left us. He bade farewell to Mahvash, who at that time was also in prison. Then he came to see me and told me, "For the sake of your children [outside] and your daughter in prison, be brave and steadfast." Then he kissed me goodbye and went away ... The next night when the guards who had been with him during the last moments of his life brought to me my husband's clothing and personal effects I could not bear it and became very sad. They

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admonished me, "Why are you sad? Last night your husband was full of smiles. At the time of his death he said to us, 'Don't tie my hands or cover my eyes,' and placing his right hand over his heart he exclaimed, 'Don't shoot at my heart because it is the seat of my beloved!' "1 In the shooting his right thumb was struck by a bullet; while his body was being washed for burial it was noticed that his lips were smiling.'

(Translated from the Persian by RUSTOM SABIT)

ARTHUR JOSEPH GUSTAVE RUGGOO

1923-1981

Arthur Joseph Gustave Ruggoo, who was born on 24 February 1923 in Mauritius, was among the first to respond with total conviction to the teachings of the Bahá'í Faith which he learned of through Miss Otilie Rhein,² Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for that island. He embraced the Faith on 14 September 1956 and served it faithfully until the end of his earthly life. For many years he was a member of the Local Spiritual Assembly of Port-Louis. From the beginning he was enthusiastic in his espousal, staunch in his conviction and very much in love with the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh. He made it a duty to open the Bahá'í Centre every evening and he was the last to leave it in the late hours of the night. The question of every enquirer would be answered with characteristic patience and thoroughness. He had a keen interest in the prophecies of the Bible and he was careful to ensure that the person he was teaching understood that Bahá'u'lláh was the Promised One Whose coming was foretold in the Bible and other holy Writings.

Picture in Upper Right Corner with the Caption: Arthur Joseph Gustave Ruggoo

When, in 1966, the National Spiritual Assembly called for pioneers for Seychelles he arose with sincerity and devotion and settled there for six years during which time he contributed greatly towards the progress of the Cause in those islands. During those years he had to return to Mauritius for short periods due to visa problems and in such intervals he would undertake special teaching projects in Réunion and Madagascar. In 1974 when a call was made for a pioneer for Rodrigues he again arose and served there under difficult and trying circumstances until 1980. The slow progress of the Faith in Rodrigues and the demoralizing conditions that obtained did not discourage him; he laboured patiently knowing that one day the seed would grow. Early in 1981 he went back to Rodrigues to spend four months on a teaching project. He was to have returned to Mauritius on 7 May 1981 but he fell ill suddenly at his pioneering post and died during the night of May sixth. He was given a Bahá'í burial which was attended by many people of various religious denominations as he was very well loved in Rodrigues.

Mr. Ruggoo served the Faith with distinction. An accomplished painter and artist, he made many exhibitions for the Bahá'ís. He always voluntarily and gladly devoted his spare time to the maintenance, renovation and improvement of Bahá'í properties. He was always simple and humble. His selflessness and purity of heart endeared him to one and all. The National Spiritual Assembly of Seychelles sent the following message on receiving the news of his death:

1 See Bahá'u'lláh, Hidden Words, (Arabic) No. 59.

2 See 'In Memoriam', p. 703

COMMUNITY DEEPLY SHOCKED PASSING DEARLY LOVED HEROIC STEADFAST SELFSACRIFICIN
BROTHER JOSEPH RUGGOO.

NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF MAURITIUS

KENNETH ALLAN MORAIS

1942-1981

Kenneth Morais, born on 29 July 1942 in the City of the Covenant (New York), lived an active life dedicated to the service of humanity until he departed this world on 29 May 1981. Kenneth, or 'Ka' as he was also called, was the son of Steibel and Kathryn Morais. Steibel emigrated from Jamaica, West Indies, to the United States, and married Kathryn who bore him two daughters and two sons who enjoyed a Christian upbringing.

After graduating from Public School 46 and the High School of Music and Art in New York, Ka attended Brooklyn Community College, New York University, Cabrillo College and the New York Institute of Photography. As an artist he made collages, painted with oils and acrylics, did scrimshaw and made animated and regular films, but he was best known as a photographer. His most important photographic works were his 'Terrainiums', or 'interior landscapes', striking and provocative three-dimensional photographic constructions which won him acclaim. He exhibited at the Studio Museum in Harlem whose director, Mary S. Campbell, described him as 'a fine photographer, one whose photographs it was an honour to exhibit at the Studio Museum'. Shortly after Ka's passing, the Black Photographers' Association of New York, at a meeting held in his honour to which some members of the Bahá'í community were invited, awarded him their certificate of merit.

Picture in Lower Left Corner with the Caption: Kenneth Allan Morais

Ka became a Bahá'í in the 1960s, despite the disapproval of his mother, and actively engaged in its service. He was bent on serving not only his country but mankind. As soon as he was discharged from the United States army in which he served in the war in Vietnam he busied himself rendering assistance to refugees in Thailand and Korea where he taught the Bahá'í Faith, distributed its literature, and worked towards translating its books into the Khmer language. In 1978-1979 he taught English at Ube Academy in Ube, Japan. His service in Thailand was interrupted in 1981 when he had to return to the United States to take care of his mother. Ka took his leave from this world on a warm sunny day in late spring. It happened in Washington Square Park, New York, where he was taking photographs. He came upon a group of musicians and began to dance to their music, delighting the many children among the large crowd of spectators, when he suddenly fell to the ground as a result of a heart attack. Medical assistance proved futile. He was buried at the Veteran's Cemetery, Long Island.

Jack Walker, whose fireside meetings Ka had attended, offers this description: 'Kenneth was selfless. Material wealth was not important to him. He was more interested in his spiritual growth.' Another friend states that he 'was soft-spoken, reserved and had a keen gift of observation. His conspicuous

figure and his personality will be remembered wherever he visited.' Vaughan Smith, a fellow believer in Thailand, has written, 'Kenneth had been pioneering in Korea for a year and had been

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travel teaching in Thailand twice. During the Kampuchean crisis of December 1979 he was so moved that he quit his job in Korea and came to Thailand to help the Khmer refugees at the border. We thought that if he wanted to help refugees he should go into the Lao camps where there were Bahá'ís. He, however, went to help the Khmer masses. He had a really dynamic personality and was loved and respected by us all ... he was a true servant of mankind ... he returned to the U.S.A. to help his ailing mother and never had the chance to continue his wonderful pioneering work.'

In a letter written on its behalf on 13 December 1981 the Universal House of Justice expressed sorrow at the passing of this 'stalwart Bahá'í pioneer and travelling teacher in several Asian countries ... who strove to help the friends in these areas. His assistance to the refugees of these strife-torn lands, especially to the Cambodians, and his efforts [to facilitate translations of the Bahá'í Writings into Khmer] will be remembered by future generations. Ardent prayers will be offered in the Holy Shrines for the progress of this servant's soul.'

His passing was commemorated by his sister, Lisa Morais, in her poem, 'In Memoriam':

My brother

Died in celebration

While dancing

In a park.

A circle formed;

He was its centre.

My brother laughed

As he leaped into the air

Karate kicks, joyous movement.

The crowd whistled its approval

Until, in the middle of the dance,

His body jerked, losing its rhythms.

And crashed to the ground.

Later

We heard news of the news of the performance.

Two women told us of the joy they

Felt while watching him.

A true celebration of life, they said,

A fitting death for a wanderer.

Your family is not left

With the emptiness of a tragedy

We know you died

A pied piper

Leading the way with your dance.

(Based on a memoir by IVAN S. GRAHAM and ARTIS WILLIAMS)

RITA VAN BLEYSWIJK SOMBEEK

1903-1981

GRIEVED NEWS PASSING RITA VAN BLEYSWIJK SOMBEEK DEVOTED MAIDSERVANT BAHAUULLAH WHO RENDERED VALIANT PIONEERING SERVICES HIS FAITH SWEDEN ITALY LUXEMBOURG NETHERLANDS UNDERTOOK EXTENSIVE TRAVELS MANY LANDS. HER ACHIEVEMENTS INDELIBLY ENGRAVED ANNALS ESTABLISHMENT CAUSE EUROPEAN CONTINENT. PRAYING FERVENTLY ABUNDANT REWARD ABHA KINGDOM.

Universal House of Justice, 8 June 1981

Picture in Lower Right Corner with the Caption: Rita van Bleyswijk Sombeek

On 28 May 1981, one day before the commemoration of the Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh, Rita van Sombeek, one of the first Dutch believers, passed away at the age of seventy-

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eight. She had pioneered for the Cause of God and served Bahá'u'lláh faithfully to the end of her life. Rita was an example for many and her history is inextricably bound up with that of the Dutch Bahá'í community. In connection with her share of service she continually referred to the statement of the Guardian's to the effect that God uses every willing instrument he needs for the promotion of His Cause; it was her explanation for the many wonderful circumstances which had determined her life, a subject which she never tired speaking about:

'The firm I was working for in Amsterdam transferred me to New York. I arrived there on 1 May 1940, just before the May 10th invasion of the Netherlands. Why was I so fortunate? Through another coincidence I then heard about the Bahá'í Faith, and after attending a lecture by Stanwood Cobb¹ I was immediately attracted and enthusiastic, and thereafter I hardly ever missed a study class or lecture.' Yet despite her enthusiasm, she did not accept the Faith. 'I attributed my indecision to my atheism and my deep-rooted prejudice against all mission work. Then, in 1945, I heard Dorothy Baker speak about the

Administrative Order. I realized, then, that what held me back was my selfishness and a lack of spirit of sacrifice, for I recognized that if I became a Bahá'í, I would feel obliged to return to the Netherlands. I know that my life passed before me in a flash. Suddenly Dorothy Baker stood before me and said, "Now you are a Bahá'í," and, further, "Pioneer!" '

After her enrolment during the summer school at Green Acre, Rita came in contact with Mr. Mrs. Max Greeven,² an American Bahá'í couple who, in 1930, moved from New York to Bremen, Germany, and then to The Hague where they remained from 1937 until 1940. Mr. Greeven was responsible for the publication in Holland of Captain J. A. Liebau's translations into Dutch of *The Hidden Words of Bahá'u'lláh* and *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era* by Dr. J. E. Esslemont, editions of which all but a few copies were, unfortunately, destroyed in the bombing of Rotterdam. At Mr. Greeven's prompting Rita wrote to Shoghi Effendi offering to go to the Netherlands, although she felt inexperienced and she was able to get only a six-month leave of absence, and received a reply written on his behalf on 5 March 1946 stating, 'The need for Bahá'í workers in Europe is enormously great,' and encouraging her to 'do everything possible to bring this Message of hope to people who have endured so much misery and disappointment'. She sold everything she had of value, wanting to be free to devote her life to the Faith.

At the end of World War II Rita's sister, Georgette ('Jetty'),³ joined her in the United States and eventually became a Bahá'í. In response to the second Seven Year Plan which called for a systematic programme of teaching in ten European countries the sisters left for Europe on 25 September 1946 aboard the *Westerdam*, sharing a cabin with Edna True, chairman of the European Teaching Committee. In Rita's words: 'While in America, Jerry[sic] had begun to translate; later we worked together on Mr. Esslemont's book after it was decided by the European Teaching Committee not to reprint the old edition. After a long search we found the printer Grapo who received the manuscript in January 1947 after we had worked on it for many hours a day for four months, in an ice-cold room with only school dictionaries available. In April the edition was ready. Also that spring most of the pioneers arrived in Europe and could start the teaching work. On 21 April 1947 the first Local Spiritual Assembly in Amsterdam was formed.'

In 1949 Rita returned to the United States in order to maintain her American citizenship which she greatly prized. From there she went as a pioneer to Sweden. At this time a friendship began with another believer of Dutch heritage, Mrs. Geertrui Bates, who wrote of her, 'Rita was a very attractive, indeed a striking woman, fluent and convincing whenever she talked about the Faith. She was athletic and loved skiing. I met her again in 1951 after she had returned to Amsterdam. With the encouragement of the Hand of the Cause Ugo Giachery, Rita went to Italy and began a study of Italian, but she found her stay there disheartening because there was so little receptivity to the Faith. In addition to English, she was also fluent in German. When

1 See 'In Memoriam', p. 814.

2 See 'In Memoriam', The Bahá'í World, vol. XIII, p. 909.

3 See 'In Memoriam', The Bahá'í World, vol. XVII, p. 475.

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I pioneered to Luxembourg in 1956, Rita was there too, and she lovingly offered me hospitality until I could find a place to live. She was always the charming hostess, ever striving for perfection and demanding a great deal of herself. You could always appeal to her for help. She had a noteworthy integrity and would never let the Faith down even if it meant taking on and carrying through to completion projects which she had not originated and which, with her strong sense of realism and practical perspective, she had originally opposed because she recognized that they were perhaps born of the enthusiasm of the friends and in their scope exceeded our capacity to execute them. I have learned much from her.

'Rita had a great devotion to the Faith. In order to be independent of the Fund she relinquished her American citizenship so that she might obtain a permanent position in the Netherlands. Although she never complained, we knew that she was ill, receiving treatments and having to adhere to a strict diet. Nothing was too much for her; she carried out her duties as though she had never become sick.'

Back in the Netherlands Rita settled down together with her beloved sister, Jetty Straub (who in the meantime had become a widow) as the first Bahá'ís of Doesburg. In 1968 Rita went to Doetinchem to strengthen the community there. Her vast experience in teaching and administrative work must have greatly benefited the friends there who formed their first Local Spiritual Assembly at Ridván 1970. From 1973 Jetty and Rita lived in Zeist, serving on the first Local Spiritual Assembly there. Jetty died in 1979. Now they are reunited in the Abhá Kingdom. We Bahá'ís in Europe are greatly indebted to Rita and the other valiant pioneers who came after the war. To Rita we are especially grateful for the large number of translations she made of the Bahá'í Writings; her name will forever remain associated with the translation of Bahá'í literature into Dutch.

(Adapted from a memoir by LOTTIE TOBIAS)

YOWANE SANDANDO

1910-1981

Yowane Sandando was born on 12 May 1910 in Samaka'i village, Balovale District (Zambezi) of Zambia. He left his home in 1936 and moved to the Copperbelt Province. In 1948 he moved to Nampundwe, Lusaka Province, and in 1973 he settled in Machipisa village, Mumbwa District. Here, in September 1977, he heard the Message of Bahá'u'lláh and, although he was confined to bed, he embraced the Faith with joy and happiness. 'These are the principles which we need. These are the teachings which can unite the whole area. I would be delighted to be accepted as one of the followers of Bahá'u'lláh.' These were the words uttered by Mr. Sandando immediately after he learned about the

purpose of the Bahá'í Faith. He declared himself a believer and served the Faith until the very last moment of his life.

Yowane was kind and helpful to everybody; his love and kindness had no limits. Most of the Bahá'ís who met him felt that his spiritual qualities could be compared to those shown by the early believers of the Faith during the lifetimes of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá. He received everybody with joy and open arms. His generosity and love attracted many people to his house where he offered them the life-giving Message of Bahá'u'lláh. From the moment he accepted the Faith until the time of his passing, he took every opportunity to teach the Cause. He always travelled with some Bahá'í pamphlets and declaration cards, and many people in different areas declared their belief through his efforts. He opened to the Faith more than fifty villages in his area and managed to teach many village headmen, including the senior chief of the area, Chief Shakumbila.

From 1978 he served as an assistant to the Auxiliary Board and, at Ridván 1980, was elected a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Zambia. He was always present at its meetings and anxious to serve. He assisted greatly in the construction of the Mumbwa Regional Hazíratu'l-Quds by organizing the workers, feeding and accommodating them, and by preparing the building materials. By his example he encouraged the Bahá'ís to take part in the construction of the

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Picture in Upper Left Corner with the Caption: Yowane Sandando

Centre. Upon its completion, through his encouragement, a Bahá'í school was organized at the Hazíratu'l-Quds, the first Bahá'í education centre in Zambia. At one stage more than 160 Bahá'í and other children were attending the school and learning Bahá'í prayers and songs. The school is still being conducted. He created a wonderful spirit of harmony and friendship between the Bahá'í community and the churches of the area.

He came to Lusaka to attend the National Spiritual Assembly meeting during the weekend of 24-25 May and was cheerful and happy as usual. Four days later a message reached Lusaka that on the eve of 29 May 1981 Yowane Sandando ascended to the Abhá Kingdom at his home in Machipisa due to an apparent stroke. The news of his death was shocking and unexpected. On Saturday, 30 May, a Bahá'í funeral was held at which more than 400 people were present. Even his funeral was a means of teaching and proclamation of the Faith. His body was put to rest in a spot not very far from the Regional Bahá'í Centre that he loved so much.

IRAJ YAZDANI

MASÍH FARHANGÍ

1912-1981

Dr. Masíh Farhangí was born in June 1912 in a village near Shahsavár in the province of Gilán, Írán. At age five he started attending a school established and directed by his father, a learned clergyman in the town of

Langarúd. He was still a young boy when his father embraced the Bahá'í Faith, through contact with Mr. Tarázu'lláh of Qazvín (later known as the Hand of the Cause of God Tarázu'lláh Samandarí), changed his attire and started to spread the Bahá'í message to the extent that in the religious education classes at the school he mentioned the Bahá'í religion along with other religions of the world.

At home young Masíh was encouraged by his father to read the Bible as well as the Qur'án, and he accompanied his father to Bahá'í meetings where he chanted prayers and passages from the Holy Writings. He attended high school first in Rasht and then in Tihrán. While in Tihrán he associated with Bahá'í youth and received loving guidance from Saifu'lláh Majídí who used to take him to Bahá'í study classes. He gradually deepened his knowledge of the Faith and at age fifteen became a devoted Bahá'í youth. He continued to study the Bahá'í Writings both in Persian and Arabic.

He enrolled in the college of medicine of the University of Tihrán and earned his living expenses by teaching science and French at the Bahá'í Tarbíyat School. His knowledge of the Faith was further enriched through association with such scholars as 'Azízu'lláh Misbáh and Fádíl-i-Shírází. During summer vacations he used to go back to his home town where, at the home of his parents, he held firesides to which he invited his friends. He also taught classes for Bahá'í children; among those attending were his brothers and sisters. In addition, he used to travel to villages in the area where he met and held discussions with his father's acquaintances, usually learned divines. After graduating in 1937 he married Qamaru'l-Mulúk, a graduate from medical college who was not at that time a Bahá'í but who later embraced the Faith through association with the friends. Dr. Farhangí started his medical practice in Tihrán and later, upon advice from Bahá'í friends, transferred to Rasht.

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In June 1941 the Farhangí family, aware of the Guardian's wish for Persian believers to pioneer in 'Iráq, managed to gather together sufficient funds through the sale of their belongings to settle in that country. World War II was raging and it was not an easy task, with two small children, to function in a strange land where shortages of food and medicine were being experienced. Dr. Farhangí continued to be active as a travelling teacher between Baghdád and Karkúk, and was honoured by election to the National Spiritual Assembly of 'Iráq. When, in 1943, the Persian Bahá'ís were forced to leave 'Iráq and return to Írán, Dr. Farhangí, who had spent all his savings, was advised by the National Spiritual Assembly to settle and practice in Rasht where, with the help of an old friend, he managed to procure the necessary equipment and open his office. Obstacles beyond his control prevented Dr. Farhangí from pioneering in Bahrein in 1944, as he had hoped he might, and he had to be content with going back to Gilán where he reopened his office and resumed his travels, teaching in the villages of Láhján, journeying mostly on foot along mountain routes.

Picture in Upper Right Corner with the Caption: Mas'ih Farhangí

From 1949 through 1954 he served as a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Írán, and in June 1954 he had the privilege of making his pilgrimage to the Holy Shrines and attaining the presence of the beloved Guardian who inspired him with the determination to serve once again in the pioneering field. It was his wish to go to one of the foreign goals of the Ten Year Plan but could not readily find a means of doing so as he had limited resources and was responsible for the support of his wife and four children and his mother. In this period he frequently dreamed of Shoghi Effendi who would emphasize the necessity of pioneering abroad. Finally he wrote a letter to the Guardian, through Shoghi Effendi's Persian secretary, Dr. Lutfu'lláh Hakím, in which he implored the Guardian to pray at the Holy Shrines so that the object of his longing might be fulfilled and the means for his journey to foreign lands might be provided. A month later offers of employment for both Dr. Farhangí and his wife came from Indonesia. At the same time he received a visa for travelling to Turkey. After consultation about the matter at a session of the National Spiritual Assembly in which the latest letter from the Guardian asking the Persian believers to help strengthen the Bahá'í community of Turkey was read, the decision of the National Spiritual Assembly was in favour of the Farhangí family pioneering to Turkey. Obedient to this decision, Dr. Farhangí and his family set out for Turkey in preference to Indonesia, in spite of the fact that there was no chance of employment and their savings were enough to maintain them for only three years. Both Dr. Farhangí and his wife registered as graduate students in a medical college and with divine assistance managed to stay in Turkey until the formation of the National Spiritual Assembly in 1959. Dr. Farhangí was elected secretary. Forced to return to Írán at the end of that year, he resumed his medical practice in Rasht and was again elected a member of the National Assembly. He served with distinction on the Auxiliary Board and, in 1968, was appointed a member of the Continental Board of Counsellors.

After participating in the Palermo Conference in 1968, Dr. Farhangí gave up his

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medical practice and devoted his full time to the service of the Faith in his new capacity. He and his wife travelled in India, from north to south, and in accordance with instructions from the Universal House of Justice they also visited Sri Lanka. In 1973 he was present in the Holy Land for the third International Convention and participated in the consultations of the Hands of the Cause and Continental Boards of Counsellors following which he continued his travels to countries in central and western Asia. The method of teaching employing the especially prepared album which Dr. Farhangí introduced in Írán was of great assistance and inspiration to thousands of Bahá'ís, particularly the youth.

Dr. Farhangí was arrested on 6 February 1980, and after being imprisoned for a

year and a half in Evin Prison he was executed on 24 June 1981. His funeral was attended by a large number of Bahá'í friends. His family received many expressions of sympathy from the many non-Bahá'ís who loved and admired him, including some who had been in prison with him but who were later released. They remarked on the calm and dignified way in which he accepted his fate, and described how he had won their hearts by serving as a physician in prison, tending the sick and offering solace and comfort to prisoners who were condemned to death. His death was deplored by his medical colleagues, and the Medical Association of Rasht made a written protest. Some twenty days before his martyrdom he met his family with a smile when they visited him in prison. 'My destiny is bright; don't worry about me,' he told his wife and sisters. 'Since they have executed a few members of the Auxiliary Board, a Counsellor is also needed.'

Dr. Farhangí's daughter in Canada explained in an interview published in the 1 July 1981 issue of the Dundas Star Journal that her father, a cardiologist, had been asked to treat patients in the prison when he was imprisoned himself. His treatment, she remarked, was not only physical, but mental and spiritual for those facing death and possible torture. 'My father always served throughout his life, helping people — a true example of a good person.' The letters she had received from her father the week before he was killed were inspiring. 'I could see in his writing how happy he was serving the people, and I realized that he was ready for what God wanted him to do. He prayed every day that all the problems of the world will one day end. And, he told us how to be happy and serve humanity.' He was keenly interested in history and philosophy, was a writer and painter and spoke six languages.

His last letter written from prison was addressed to his wife. 'At this last moment of my transitory life, when I am on my way to the realm of eternity, I bid you farewell. I beg you to accept, with great patience and forbearance, what God has willed. Be thankful; be patient!' he admonished. 'During our forty-four years together I have felt nothing but tranquility and comfort. I had no wish except companionship with you. I hope you are pleased with me and will not deny me your loving prayers ... I am greatly relieved at this moment, content and pleased. I yield my thanks to God that He has vouchsafed to me this final overwhelming blessing. Praised be God, the Lord of all the worlds!' With words such as these Dr. Masíh Farhangí turned his gaze from the mortal world and with light step and joyous heart set out upon the crimson path of martyrdom.

(Translated from the Persian by FU'ÁD ASHRAF)

MUHAMMAD MUSTAFÁ

1898-1981

Knight of Bahá'u'lláh

DEEPLY GRIEVED PASSING EMINENT DISTINGUISHED SERVANT BLESSED BEAUTY MEMBER BOARD COUNSELLORS AFRICA KNIGHT BAHULLAH DEARLY LOVED MUHAMMAD MUSTAFA. LONG RECORD DEDICATED SERVICES IN ADMINISTRATIVE TEACHING FIELDS HIS

SELSACRIFICING AUDACIOUS EFFORTS IN PROMOTION DEFENCE BELOVED FAITH
UNFORGETTABLE. CONVEY BEREAVED FAMILY FRIENDS LOVING SYMPATHY. PRAYING HOLY
SHRINES FURTHER UNFOLDMENT PROGRESS HIS NOBLE SOUL ABHA KINGDOM.

Universal House of Justice

This most beautiful testimony summarizes vividly the sixty-five years of
Bahá'í life of this

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Picture in Upper Left Corner with the Caption: Muhammad Mustafá

last remnant of the dedicated band of first Egyptian Bahá'ís. Born in the remote Nile Delta village of El Dhahriya to a fanatical Muslim father, raised in an entrenched Islami[sic] community, tutored in a Quranic village school which provided no more than primary school education. Muhammad Mustafá, a telegraph operator at fifteen, rose, through the creative breath of faith in Bahá'u'lláh Whom he spontaneously and unconditionally accepted at the first hint, to become one of the veteran Bahá'í administrators, an experienced and reliable translator for the beloved Guardian, a defender of the Cause in the heart of the Islamic and Arab world, the subject of concern of both Egyptian Muslim clergy and state officials, a diffuser of the Glad Tidings in Egypt, Sudan and North Africa as well as other African countries, a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh, the rallying point and source of love and encouragement to the valiant Egyptian Bahá'í community deprived of its administrative framework since 1960, and, during the last six years of his life, a member of the Continental Board of Counsellors.

He first heard the name 'Abdu'l-Bahá at age sixteen when his friend, 'Abdu'r-Rahmán Rushdí, who had just accepted the Faith, wisely put a booklet entitled Ten Days in the Light of Acca on his telegraph office table in Etai-El-Baroud, a town midway between Cairo and Alexandria, when Mustafá dropped in casually to keep him company. A third person, an interim railway station master, picked it up and commented unfavourably on 'Abdu'l-Bahá and His principles. Muhammad Mustafá's reaction was spontaneous: 'A Person with such principles and so many followers cannot but be True. I am one of His followers!' Some time later, he was taken to a meeting by Rushdí. The subject of the signs of the advent of the Promised One were discreetly approached by the experienced Bahá'í teacher and friends. Muhammad Mustafá, to the astonishment of all present, suddenly exclaimed, 'He has come and His name is 'Abdu'l-Bahá ... ' And Mustafá joined the ranks of the faithful.

Transferred to Tanta, he later went to Port Said where he shared with the other believers the persecutions of 1919 and 1920. He was not physically harmed, but he was among the frontline defenders of the Faith. He wrote to the Master and received three loving Tablets bearing the salutations, O thou who art turning thy face towards God!, O thou who art attracted by the fragrances of God! and O brave friend!

In the service of the beloved Guardian he was privileged to visit the Holy

Shrines almost yearly up to 1933. Every moment he spent with his beloved remained imprinted in his mind and heart. The beloved Guardian once admitted him to his office when he was ill in bed and told him that even though ill and unable to move he had to carry on, so great was the volume of work before him. Mustafá learnt then the need for the friends to intensify their efforts to assist the Guardian with his overwhelming load. Shoghi Effendi relied upon Mustafá for a number of English and Arabic translations; till the end of his life, he devoted himself to translating into Arabic the Guardian's messages and incomparable prose. 'My dear and precious fellow-worker,' the Guardian once addressed a postscript to him, ' ... Your perseverance, your utter devotion, your sublime faith, your selfless

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labours are all graven upon my heart.' And in another, Shoghi Effendi wrote, 'Your translation of the document will be of great service and assistance to the Cause. You should rejoice and be happy and thankful. I assure you of my prayers for your success and spiritual advancement. I will never forget you.' In two other communications the Guardian addressed him as 'O beloved of the hearts of the friends' and 'O faithful friend'.

The first Local Spiritual Assemblies and the first National Spiritual Assembly of Egypt saw Muhammad Mustafá an active member; for many years he was national secretary — an office he discharged most ably — and later chairman. Until he pioneered in 1953 he served on the national and on local assemblies. His life contained a series of 'firsts' for the Egyptian Bahá'í community. He was the first to marry in an exclusively Bahá'í ceremony without the customary traditional Muslim rites (his bride, Farida Naimi, was privileged on the morrow to attain the cordial and loving presence of the Greatest Holy Leaf); the first to register his children as Bahá'ís at birth; the first to be appointed Auxiliary Board member and, later, Counsellor from amongst the Egyptian believers.

The Guardian's announcement of the Ten Year Crusade made him restless. With meagre resources he pioneered to the desolate Spanish Sahara for which service he was named a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh. Denied residence, he resettled for a year in Benghazi, Libya. The ascension of the beloved Guardian caught him ill in bed in his home in Cairo. So great was the shock that it could be said to have endangered his life. Yet he managed to write to his fellow members of the Regional Spiritual Assembly of North-West Africa exhorting them to turn to the World Centre and the Hands of the Cause.

Between 1954 and 1960 he travelled in north, east and west Africa helping, amongst other activities, in the erection of the Regional Spiritual Assembly of North-West Africa in 1956. Wherever he went he was a source of happiness and encouragement to the friends and he assisted them in their teaching efforts through his knowledge of the Scriptures and Writings.

In 1958 he returned to Egypt. Clouds of opposition were collecting. A presidential decree, in 1960, disbanded all Bahá'í assemblies in Egypt and

the believers there flocked around their two Auxiliary Board members, Muhammad Mustafá and 'Abdu'r-Rahim Yazdí.

In 1965 a number of Bahá'ís were summarily incarcerated under serious false accusations and risked simple disappearance; Muhammad Mustafá was at the head of the list. Without hesitation he took full responsibility and requested, in vain, that the other believers be set free. Released under bail, he and the other victims remained subject to restraint until June 1967 when he and an even larger number of friends were thrown into a concentration camp. Auxiliary Board member 'Abdu'r-Rahim Yazdí was expelled from the country leaving Mustafá as the only reference for the loved ones in Egypt. Released after six months, these believers, and the Bahá'í community as a whole, continued to suffer even greater restrictions. In March 1972 Mustafá and ninety-two believers ranging in age from two to seventy-five years, including thirty-three women and two children, were imprisoned in Tanta and publicly accused in the mass media of treason, espionage and misconduct. Miraculously released under bail after forty days of suffering, those loved ones and the whole community gathered round Muhammad Mustafá who became their comforter and adviser. His long experience in the administrative and teaching fields, his relatively wide travels, and his calm and percipient spirit were the basis of the guidance emanating from him to the friends. A deeply loving heart, eyes that saw no evil, and a mind enriched with memories of the beloved Guardian brought him so close to the hearts of the believers in Egypt that for them he was a father or a brother. His modest home was the haven for all, and despite meagre resources his wife somehow accommodated everyone who approached their ever-open door. The friends simply loved to come and sit with them both, and quickly enveloped the couple with such love and attention that any visitor could not help but notice and marvel.

As the older generation in Egypt slowly left this world, Muhammad Mustafá, guided by the instructions of the beloved Universal House of Justice, literally reared the younger generation, moulding it into a loving, united

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and active community.

By 1978, when he was eighty, age and long-suffering and hardship showed clearly their effects, but he continued travelling, comforting and visiting in Egypt. The loss of his wife in October 1979 was a staggering blow; she had been his mainstay for fifty-three years and her self-sacrifice and self-effacement had permitted him to dedicate his life to the Faith. Two of her three sons and her only daughter had pioneered outside Egypt in 1952, 1954 and 1956 and she had suffered terribly during the periods when her husband was pioneering, travelling or in prison. Yet so encompassing was her love that to neighbours and friends, Bahá'ís and non-Bahá'ís, she was the living example of the mother for the New Day. A letter of condolence received from the Universal House of Justice seemed to call forth from Mustafá a final concerted effort to serve the loved ones. Towards the end of 1980 his health seemed to deteriorate

rapidly; in 1981 he often intimated that his end had come and prayed tearfully that 'the House of Justice be content with me'. Just two days before he passed away he painfully walked up to a rear door in his room and waved goodbye to the few flowers and trees he loved in his small garden; and as the friends tried to give him his medicine he would refuse it saying, 'You are only trying to delay the longed-for encounter.'

Thus ended the life of Muhammad Mustafá who was dedicated to the Master, the beloved Guardian and the Universal House of Justice; who served on four local and two national Spiritual Assemblies and as Auxiliary Board member and Counsellor; who taught and travelled for the Faith in many African countries; who translated dozens of messages and documents and wrote two most significant booklets in Arabic, a book of proofs in English and a similar but more elaborate one in Arabic; who was three times imprisoned for the Faith yet defended it before clergy, in the press, and from Covenant-breakers; who was loved by the friends; who was loving, humble, and ever-encouraging; whose home was a haven for everyone who cared to come in; and whose numerous gifts in his beautiful handwriting of Tablets, prayers and the Kitáb-i-Aqdas will constitute a touching and educating remembrance for his grandchildren and for generations to come.

Before his death, on 15 August 1981, he had asked that his grave be the simplest, and placed lower than all others at the Bahá'í cemetery in Cairo. His loved ones obeyed his wish; but in their hearts the memory of Muhammad Mustafá is a monument highly cherished and remembered. ROWSHAN MUSTAFÁ

MOHAMMED EBRAHIMJI LUKMANI

(MUHAMMAD IBRÁHÍMJÍ LUQMÁNÍ)

1896-1981

Dr. M. E. Lukmani was one of the best-known Bahá'ís in India and was known to Bahá'ís far beyond its borders. A homeopathic physician by training, he was able to present the Faith to many who came to him as patients. He learned of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh from the renowned teacher, Mr. Mihr'alí Munji, who devoted many months to confirming him. By 1920 Dr. Lukmani was a fully-fledged believer and was actively teaching. Mr. Ghulam-'Alí Kurlawala, who became the Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for Daman, was among the many whom he taught and who arose to render outstanding service to the Faith.

Dr. Lukmani was soon elected a member of the Local Spiritual Assembly of Bombay and within two years was serving as its chairman. He strove to intensify teaching activities in Bombay by arranging public lectures which prominent scholars of the Faith from East and West — including Keith Ransom Kehler, Fred Schopflocher, Mírzá Mahmúd Zarqání and Mírzá Munír Nabílzádeh — were invited to address. By this means, and by press interviews, the Message was presented to the leading citizens of Bombay. In the 1930s Dr. Lukmani was elected a member of the National Spiritual Assembly and carried out his responsibilities with full devotion. He made many tours throughout India and travelled, as well, to Burma and Írán. Everywhere he taught the Faith

with great proficiency.

In 1936 he was invited to make his pilgrimage to the Holy Land and was privileged to meet Shoghi Effendi for whom he had deep love and respect and with whom he corre-

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Picture in Upper Left Corner with the Caption: M. E. Lukmani

sponded frequently from 1936 until 1956. When he returned from the Holy Land he was a new man. He increased the tempo of his activities, undertook more frequent teaching trips and took a heightened interest in national Bahá'í activities. In the early 1940s he pioneered to Hyderabad, and after some years moved on to Surat and Sholapur. Everywhere he went, many accepted the Faith through him. On 6 May 1942 the Guardian penned in his own hand, as a postscript to a letter written on his behalf to Dr. Lukmani, 'May the Beloved bless abundantly and continually your high endeavours, and reward you a thousandfold for the admirable manner in which you have arisen to serve His Faith in virgin territories, and at so critical a time in the history of the world.' Dr.

Lukmani participated in summer and winter schools throughout India, accompanied visiting teachers from abroad on their lecture tours, and took a keen interest in the purchase of the national Hazíratu'l-Quds in New Delhi, gratified that its acquisition had pleased the Guardian. Shoghi Effendi wrote to him on 25 March 1943, 'Your noble efforts are highly meritorious in the sight of God. I am deeply thankful, and will continue to pray for you from the depths of my heart. Persevere in your historic task, and rest assured, and be happy.'

Dr. Lukmani's most important service to the Faith was his pioneering to Sri Lanka (Ceylon) in response to the Guardian's appeal. On 23 May 1949 Shoghi Effendi's secretary wrote on his behalf, 'You have no idea of how happy it has made him to know that at last a pioneer has carried the torch of Bahá'u'lláh to that country! A service highly meritorious in the sight of God and one long overdue.' In the Guardian's own hand was appended, 'Your spontaneous and exemplary response has rejoiced my heart and evoked my intense admiration. . . I am eager to learn of the progress of your work for which I cherish the highest hopes.' Later, Shoghi Effendi referred to him as Fátih, 'the (spiritual) "Conqueror" of Ceylon'. He performed outstanding services in Sri Lanka, and saw the formation of Local Spiritual Assemblies. Thus the groundwork was laid for the establishment, in 1962, of the National Spiritual Assembly, with its seat in Colombo where, with the assistance of the National Spiritual Assembly of India, a beautiful national Hazíratu'l-Quds had been purchased.

Having completed his mission in Sri Lanka, Dr. Lukmani returned to India in 1956 and settled in Aurangabad where he continued to reside until October 1981 when the Messenger of Joy called him to the realm beyond. His earthly remains were laid to eternal rest in Aurangabad, while his soul winged its way to reunion with Shoghi Effendi whom he had loved more than anything in life. Dr. Lukmani's services undoubtedly ensure him a permanent place in the Bahá'í history of India. The Universal House of Justice cabled on 22 October:

GRIEVED PASSING DEVOTED PROMOTER FAITH DR. LUKMANI. HIS LONGSTANDING RECORD SERVICES LOVINGLY REMEMBERED. PRAYING SHRINES PROGRESS HIS SOUL. CONVEY RELATIVES LOVING SYMPATHY.

(Based on a memoir by DIPCHAND KHIANRA)

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Picture in Upper Left Corner with the Caption: Bertha Mkhize

BERTHA MKHIZE

1889-1981

Nhlumba Bertha Mkhize was born on 6 June 1889 at Embo, near Umkomaas, on the south coast of Natal. Her father was Mashobane Mkhize. Her early years were spent at Embo, after which she attended the High School for Girls in Inanda. In about 1907 she became a teacher at the Inanda Seminary (American Mission) and remained there until 1911 when she started a tailoring business in Durban.

Bertha was one of the first black women to establish a business of her own in South Africa. One reason for this was that she had achieved the status of an 'emancipated' woman. In African law, if the parents feel that their daughter is upright and faithful, they may appear before a magistrate and sign a document granting their daughter the full rights of a man over the family household. At the age of twenty Bertha was emancipated, so that, unlike most Zulu women, her brothers had no power over her. She could become the head of the kraal. She never married. Bertha remained at her tailoring business until 1965 when the City Council of Durban decided to move the African businesses out of that area.

During those years, and especially the early ones, Bertha was a pioneer in the struggle for women's rights. She also campaigned against cattle culling and the dipping of people against typhus; took part in the defiance campaign against the pass laws, for which she spent a few months in prison; worked assiduously for literacy classes for about twenty years and at a crèche and a sewing group for at least twenty-five years. She also worked for a few years for an Indian charity at Phoenix, on the north coast. In this same period Bertha served at various times as president of the African Women's Association, the African National Congress Women's League and the Durban and District Women's League.

Bertha learned of the Bahá'í Faith in 1958 from Angelo Nyaba in Natal, and after a short but spirited investigation embraced it on 1 January 1959. She attended classes conducted by Prof. Bishop Brown and Mrs. Bahiyyih Ford (now Winckler). In the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh, Bertha found the message of unity and justice she had always longed for, and came to realize that in order to have the peace which was her greatest desire, unity must be with all people and justice must be for all people; there must be love and forgiveness and a spiritual foundation in a Divine Message. Having been an active political figure, Bertha took some time to see the need to follow the Bahá'í teaching of not taking part in politics. But gradually, as her heart became increasingly filled with the inspiration she found in the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, she resigned her affiliations. At the age of seventy, when most people are thinking

of retirement, Bertha arose to promote the Bahá'í Faith. For five years she worked actively in Natal and Zululand, and when the call came for a Bahá'í pioneer to live in Zululand, Bertha settled in Gezinsila, Eshowe. In co-operation with several other local Bahá'í teachers, she helped establish a total of twenty-eight Bahá'í communities in KwaZulu. She remained in KwaZulu for nine years, trudging with her cane from village to village, bringing the Glad Tidings of Bahá'u'lláh. In 1968 she was elected to the National Spiritual Assembly of South and West Africa, and served on that body until April 1969. She was a prolific translator of Bahá'í literature

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into Zulu. Her translations include many prayers, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, the Kitáb-i-Íqán, the life-story of Bahá'u'lláh, stories of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Guidance for Local Spiritual Assemblies and The New Garden.

In 1975, at the age of eighty-six, Bertha's health began to fail, but she remained at her pioneering post until 1978 when she willed her home at Gezinsila to the Bahá'í Faith and moved to Inanda, where she had received her education. She served on the Spiritual Assembly of Inanda until her passing on 3 October 1981 at the age of ninety-two. On receiving this news the Universal House of Justice cabled on 8 October:

PRAYING SHRINES PROGRESS SOUL DEVOTED PROMOTER FAITH BERTHA MKHIZE. ASSURE RELATIVES FRIENDS LOVING SYMPATHY.

Note: The following item is a rewrite of the short tribute "Knight of Bahá'u'lláh Olivia Kelsey: Devoted Servant of Faith," written by Florence Ullrich Kelley of Kaneohe, Hawaii, and Lois Bierly Walker of Alpha, Ohio, published in the April 1982 Bahá'í News. This document is online at [kelley_walker_kelsey.pdf](#) (scanned by Don Calkins). [-J.W., 2012]

OLIVIA KELSEY

1889-1981

Knight of Bahá'u'lláh

The soul that hath remained faithful to the Cause of God, and stood unwaveringly firm in His Path shall, after his ascension, be possessed of such power that all the worlds which the Almighty hath created, can benefit through him. Bahá'u'lláh

Olivia Kelsey was born on her family farm in Delaware County, Ohio, U.S.A., on 9 February 1889. Her mother died when Olivia was eleven years old, and two years later she left home to live with a maternal uncle and his wife in Cleveland.

Religion was, in Olivia's mind, a clouded question because of the religious conflict in her home. Her father was Catholic and her mother Protestant. She said that she reflected on religion and on the great men who had appeared throughout history, wondering why they did not appear again. The answer to her questions came when she met Francis Arthur Kelsey and learned of the coming of

Bahá'u'lláh. She married Arthur in 1929 and in 1932 became a member of the Bahá'í Faith. Their home in New York became a center of Bahá'í activity and hospitality. Olivia began to write poems and articles on diverse subjects, many of which were published in World Order magazine. A religious-historical drama depicting the early history of the Bahá'í Faith, 'Two shall Appear', was published, as well as a pageant entitled 'Had They Believed', a scenario, 'A Universal Language', and a satire, 'Gulliver's Return'.

During her years in New York city[sic] Olivia compiled her book Bahá'í Answers which was published in 1947. It is a collection of ninety-five questions about the Bahá'í Faith with answers compiled from the Writings of the Báb, Bahá'u'lláh, 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi, and is an invaluable aid to teachers and students of the Cause.

Olivia became deeply interested in the welfare of animals and did intensive research on the subject. Her source of inspiration was a statement by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Educate the children in their infancy to be very kind to animals ... , from a Tablet the Master sent to Roy Wilhelm; she quoted it in many of her talks over radio and television on programs sponsored by local and national humane organizations. When in Monaco, pioneering under the Ten Year Crusade, she sent a copy of this Tablet to Prince Rainier and Princess Grace who were great animal lovers. A friend once remarked that 'Olivia brought the Bahá'í Faith to the animal kingdom'.

After Arthur's death in 1937, Olivia began her long career as a Bahá'í pioneer. Under the first Seven Year Plan (1937-1944) she pioneered to Louisville, Kentucky. She worked in many communities and helped many others with newspaper, radio and television publicity. Public information and public relations were subjects which engrossed her attention during the entire fifty years of her Bahá'í life. These fields were at that time unexplored territory to the Bahá'í community in general, as very few believers had as yet taken an interest in such forms of proclamation activity. From the very beginning she made efforts to reach out to small town newspapers, even visiting such communities to make personal contacts.

In 1944 she moved to Kansas where she served on the Regional Teaching Committee until the call for pioneers under the Ten Year Crusade in 1953. She then retired from her profession. In 1954 she left for Monaco, a move

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Picture in Upper Left Corner with the Caption: Olivia Kelsey

which earned her the title Knight of Bahá'u'lláh, bestowed by the beloved Guardian. She visited the Holy Land on pilgrimage in the winter of 1954. The stories of her pilgrimage and of meeting the beloved Guardian have thrilled and inspired many. While on pilgrimage the Guardian encouraged Olivia to teach in France after the first Local Spiritual Assembly in Monaco had been firmly established. Accordingly, in 1959, in response to a call from the Hands of the Cause, she went to Toulouse and later to Montpellier to assist the Bahá'ís in

those cities, following the crisis resulting from activities of Covenant breakers. During the ten years she spent in Monaco and France she attended many European Summer Schools, the Frankfurt Conference in 1958, and the World Jubilee in London in 1963. Because of poor health, she returned to the United States in 1964, in her seventy-fifth year, and settled in Columbus, Ohio [the Bahá'í Sunday School for the entire Columbus area was named for her, becoming the Olivia Kelsey Bahá'í School. d.b. 2002], and became an active member of that community, devoting herself particularly to publicity work and extension teaching. When the Five Year Plan was launched in 1974, she was able to fulfill her wish to make teaching trips to South Carolina and West Virginia. She was then eighty-five years old.

When, in old age, Olivia was no longer able to live alone, she lived first with friends near Columbus and then with friends in Zenia and Yellow Springs. Her final months were spent at the Friends' Care Center in Yellow Springs. Neither ill health nor limited means diminished her will to teach or dimmed her devotion to the Cause she loved. Until the day she passed to the Abhá Kingdom — 13 October 1981 — she was actively teaching her nurses and all who came in contact with her.

Olivia Kelsey stands firmly in the tradition of world-minded women of strong character who emerged in the early years of the Bahá'í Faith in America. All who knew her well were enriched and deeply touched by her example. Her spirit, her talents and her capacities will be sorely missed.

The following cablegrams were received at her passing:

LONG DEDICATED DISTINGUISHED SERVICE KNIGHT BAHUULLAH OLIVIA KELSEY ADDS LUSTRE ANNALS AMERICAN BAHAI COMMUNITY. ASSURE PRAYERS BOUNTIFUL REWARD PROGRESS H SOUL ABHA KINGDOM. Universal House of Justice, 15 October 1981

PROFOUNDLY GRIEVED PASSING DEARLY LOVED HANDMAID BAHUULLAH OLIVIA KELSEY. HER EFFECTIVE TEACHING ACTIVITIES STAUNCH LOYALTY PIONEER SERVICES FEATURES HER EXEMPLARY LIFE. PRAYING ABUNDANT BLESSINGS LIFE BEYOND. The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States, 14 October 1981

FLORENCE ULLRICH KELLEY and LOIS BIERLEY WALKER

HISHMAT ADLPARVAR

?-1981

Hishmat Adlparvar Muhájir was one of several children born to Hafizu'lláh Khán and Ismat Khánum, a devout Bahá'í family of Tihrán. The family home was a centre of great activity

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and the children had the bounty of participating in the many meetings which took place there. Like her illustrious brother, Rahmatu'lláh Muhájir, Hishmat from an early age was aflame with love of the Cause and filled with a great desire to serve it. She became the very embodiment of the true Bahá'í teacher — selfless, detached, totally reliant on God and both fearless and tireless

in her efforts to spread abroad the teachings. India, Kuwait, Spain, Venezuela and the Sudan were but some of the places where her loving labours were expended. It was in the latter country to which she and her husband, Amin, had gone as pioneers in July 1981 that she fell victim to cerebral malaria and died on 25 October 1981.

Picture in Lower Left Corner with the Caption: Hishmat Adlparvar

'Ever since her arrival in Khartoum', it was reported, 'our beloved sister Hishmat Adlparvar was engaged in actively teaching the Faith, and in deepening and inspiring the believers in this country. She continually inspired the Bahá'í communities to participate in joint teaching efforts and aroused their enthusiasm by relating inspiring accounts of the progress of the Faith in India, the Philippines, South and Central America and many other countries she had either visited or had news of. Her own long and valuable experiences in teaching the Faith were also a source of inspiring stories. She was a warm, gracious hostess and constantly entertained Bahá'ís and their friends at her own home or at the homes of other friends. She was particularly intent on teaching women and deepening the Bahá'í women's knowledge of the Faith. She was a cause of unity, love and inspiration to all the friends.'

s Among the last activities she undertook were a teaching trip to various centres in Eastern Sudan and attendance at a Summer School organized by one of the Local Spiritual Assemblies on her initiative and with her encouragement. The classes she led were devoted to discussion of the importance of teaching and the bounties derived from it, and study of The Advent of Divine Justice. On the first day she presented notebooks and pens to those in attendance for use during the sessions. 'It was a memorable school and a truly joyous occasion,' reported one participant. 'Her participation, in retrospect, was like a loving farewell gift from a beloved sister and devoted handmaiden of God.'

A memorial service held on 1 November at the National Hazíratu'l-Quds drew together many sorrowing friends who regretted her loss, praised her courage and devotion, and related many stories illustrating her generosity, loving-kindness and her profound knowledge of the Faith.

Informed of her passing the Universal House of Justice cabled on 2 November 1981:

DEEPLY GRIEVED UNTIMELY PASSING DEVOTED PROMOTER FAITH HISHMAT ADLPARVAR.
PRAYING SHRINES PROGRESS HER SOUL. ASSURE RELATIVES LOVING SYMPATHY.

ARDESHIR HEZARI

(ARDISHÍR HIZÁRÍ)

1885-1981

Ardishír Hizárí was born into a Zoroastrian family in Yazd, Írán, in 1885. His parents died when he was young, leaving behind one daughter and five sons, of whom Ardishír and Rashíd were twins. Education was not universal in Persia a century ago so what little Ardishír could scoop up locally was supplemented

by that passed on to him by an

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Picture in Upper Left Corner with the Caption: Ardeshir Hezari

elder brother, Khudádád, who also guided him to the Bahá'í Faith.

In 1891 turbulent upheavals rocked Yazd and resulted in the martyrdom of seven Bahá'ís whose possessions were plundered. Ardishír who was about seven years old at the time was a witness to the martyrdom of one of this group of believers. He saw him savagely hacked to pieces and the mangled body dragged through the streets while the bystanders pelted it with sticks and stones. Asked about the reason for such monstrous conduct, Khudádád told Ardishír about the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh, gradually drawing his young brother towards the Faith. Through meetings with the elder Afnán, Hájí Mírzá Muhammad-Taqí, Ardishír became confirmed and declared his belief in the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh. From then on Ardishír joined Khudádád in his teaching work, and always they used tact and wisdom so as not to arouse antagonism among fanatical elements.

Teaching was the dominant passion of Ardishír's life. While he was working in Shíráz he would take enquirers to a prominent Bahá'í of that city who had a room adjoining his business premises, ostensibly for his siesta, but actually for use as a meeting-place by seekers and teachers of the Cause. Such was Ardishír's zeal that one day he sought to convert two outstanding Bahá'í teachers he met there whom he mistook for Muslims. These two youths were Tarázu'lláh Samandarí and 'Alí-Akbar Rafsanjání. Tarázu'lláh Samandarí, elevated by Shoghi Effendi on 24 December 1951 to the rank of Hand of the Cause, often mentioned this meeting in later years and jokingly accounted ;Ardishír as his 'teacher'. The bonds of friendship forged that day strengthened with the passing of the years.

Ardishír had the bounty of making pilgrimage to the Holy Land — once during the ministry of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and twice during the ministry of Shoghi Effendi. Tablets he received from the Master attest the sincerity of his purpose and his devotion to the Cause.

After being employed for several years Ardishír decided to start his own business with his brother Rashíd as a partner. In their desire to carry out the beloved Guardian's wishes, they decided that Ardishír would remain in Qazvín to run the business and thus provide funds for Rashíd and his family to pioneer. For the next five years their lives followed this pattern and Ardishír's participation in the activities of the Cause in Qazvín brought him great joy. Then his wife fell ill and, as her malady was incurable, she expressed a wish to die at a pioneer post and realize an ambition which fate had denied her during her life. Ardishír took her to Ankara in Turkey where his daughter and son-in-law had pioneered and where she died four months later and was buried in a plot of land donated to the Bahá'í community by Ardishír for use as a burial-ground. In spite of advanced age, Ardishír travelled to

different towns in Turkey to encourage the friends to pioneer and teach and bring up their children according to Bahá'í standards. When the Turkish believers were unjustly accused and imprisoned, Ardishír suffered along with them. The persecution resulted in wide publicity for the Cause and the eventual vindication of the friends and their release from captivity.

Later, Ardishír pioneered to Ludwigsburg, Germany, with his son-in-law and family, and thence to Mannheim where he died on 26 October 1981. On hearing of his death the Universal House of Justice, on 27 October,

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cabled to the National Spiritual Assembly of Germany:

DEEPLY GRIEVED PASSING ARDESHIR HEZARI. HIS LONG RECORD DEDICATED SERVICES CRADLE FAITH PIONEERING FIELDS LOVINGLY REMEMBERED. CONVEY FAMILY HEARTFELT SYMPATHY. (Adapted from a translation by RUSTOM SABIT of a memoir by HABIB HAZARI [HABÍB HIZÁRÍ])

HERMIONE VERA KEENS-DOUGLAS EDWARDS

1908-1981

Vera was born on 26 December 1908 in Grenville, St. Andrew's, Grenada. In 1957, accompanied by her aunt, Millicent Douglas, she took an excursion cruise to Africa and arrived in Monrovia, Liberia, in December of that year. Her aunt had known Julius Edwards prior to his moving in 1953 from Jamaica to Africa where he settled first in Ghana and then in Liberia. For his services in opening to the Faith the Northern Territories Protectorate he was named by Shoghi Effendi a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh. Vera and her aunt began attending Mr. Edwards's public meetings in Monrovia and both accepted the Bahá'í Faith in the spring of 1958. They and Mr. Edwards were elected to serve on the first Local Spiritual Assembly of Monrovia at Ridván 1958.

Picture in Lower Left Corner with the Caption: Hermione Vera Keens-Douglas Edwards.

Throughout the Ten Year Crusade Vera was a very active teacher of the Faith. She, her aunt and Julius Edwards formed a teaching team and travelled to villages throughout Liberia. Vera Keens-Douglas and Julius Edwards were married in November 1960. Vera became a naturalized Liberian and considered herself a Liberian Bahá'í.

At Ridván 1964 the Hand of the Cause John Robarts appointed Vera a member of the Auxiliary Board. That year she represented the Hands of the Cause at the first National Convention of Liberia. She was the representative of the Continental Board of Counsellors for Africa at several National Conventions — Liberia, Ghana and Gambia — and also at several important conferences in those countries as well as the Ivory Coast.

For many years, and before the present-day emphasis on the spiritual education of children, Vera single-handedly organized and taught children's classes. From 1964 until 1979 she composed monthly Feast Letters for distribution among the

believers in Gambia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Ivory Coast, Upper Volta, Ghana, Nigeria and Mali. She attended the first Youth Conference of Ivory Coast in 1967 and addressed the West African Bahá'í Women's Conference held at the University of Liberia in December 1978.

Julius and Vera Edwards left Liberia on 20 December 1979 and arrived in Grenada on 28 February 1980. She continued to be an active teacher of the Faith until her death on 19 November 1981. She bequeathed a small plot of land at Grenville, St. Andrew's, to the Bahá'í community of Grenada for an endowment.

In a written tribute to Vera Edwards, Mrs. Nura Master stated: 'She was a lady of grace, understanding and strong character whose dignity and manner quickly attracted those who came into contact with her. Through her trips, her very inspiring Feast Letters and through personal correspondence and contacts she tried tirelessly to attain and demonstrate

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the standards set by the Universal House of Justice for those who are honoured to discharge this sacred duty ... Her dissatisfaction always came from what had not been done in complete conformity with the Divine teachings.'

Vera was a kind, patient, gentle person who was deeply involved in teaching the Faith on the local level during the time she spent in Grenada; she was much loved by her Bahá'í and other associates. Informed of her passing, the Universal House of Justice on 1 December 1981 cabled:

PASSING AT NEW POST GRENADA DEVOTED BELIEVER HERMIONE VERA EDWARDS BEFITTING CULMINATION HER LONG DEDICATED PIONEERING SERVICES. OFFERING FERVENT SUPPLICATIONS HOLY THRESHOLD PROGRESS HER SOUL WORLDS GOD.

ABDUL-MISSAGH (ABDOLMISSAGH) MISSAGHIYEH

('ABDU'L-MÍTHAQ MÍTHAQÍYIH)

1890-1981

Mírzá Ilyás (Elias), later called 'Abdu'l-Missagh Missaghiyeh ('Abdu'l-Míthaq Míthaqíyih), was the grandson of Hakím Hárún, a well-known Jewish scholar and physician of Káshán, central Írán, most of whose descendants became Bahá'ís and raised large and prominent families. One of his daughters, Jahán, married Mírzá Yahúdá, an esteemed Bahá'í of Káshán, who was also of Jewish background. Although Jahán was a fierce opponent of the Bahá'í Faith at the time of her marriage and for some time later, she embraced the Cause of the Blessed Beauty and became a devout servant as a result of a dream in which she saw Bahá'u'lláh. Six children were born of the union of Mírzá Yahúdá and Jahán. Ilyás was the eldest son.

When Ilyás ('Abdu'l-Míthaq Míthaqíyih) was twelve years old he wrote a poem of eighty verses which he sent to 'Abdu'l-Bahá. The poem was both an urgent appeal to the people of the Holy Land to recognize their Lord and a confession of faith of a Bahá'í child supplicating the Master to take him under His protection and to hear his wish for sacrifice. In response, 'Abdu'l-Bahá

addressed a beautiful Tablet to the boy, alluding to him in the salutation as an eloquent and brilliant poet. In the same year Ilyás's father was attacked by enemies of the Faith who struck him with shovels. Wounded on the head, he passed away at the age of forty years, having been in a state of semi-consciousness for some months. Ilyás thus became the head of the family, and left Káshán, his native city, to seek employment in a business in Hamadán. He went later to Rasht, in the north of Írán, to direct a branch of a business belonging to Khájih Rabbí' Muttahidih, an esteemed Bahá'í of Káshán, and became the secretary of the Local Spiritual Assembly of Rasht. Some time later he was entrusted with a business mission in Kirmánsháh, a city whose population was bitterly opposed to the Faith. He was expelled from that town and replaced with by Mírzá Ya'qúb Muttahidih, Khájih's brother, who was later martyred in Kirmánsháh, thus becoming the first Bahá'í martyr of Jewish origin.

Picture in Upper Right Corner with the Caption: Abdu'l-Missagh Missaghiyeh

Mírzá Ilyás was a self-taught man. Forced to work from childhood, he had no opportunity to obtain a higher education. However, his gift for poetry was sustained by a good knowledge of Persian and Arabic. The teach-

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ing trips that he undertook in company with the great teacher, Mr. Mihdí Akhaván-i Safá enabled him to widen his knowledge of the Teachings and to gain skill in the art of presenting them. During the meetings he lifted the hearts of the participants by reading and chanting Tablets and prayers in his beautiful clear voice.

In 1912, when he was twenty-two years old, he was finally able to fulfill his dearest wish, that of making his pilgrimage and attaining the presence of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. He was again privileged to go on pilgrimage towards the end of 1919, spending forty-five unforgettable days in the Holy Land and being frequently in the company of the Master. During that sojourn, an account of which Mírzá Ilyás wrote in verse, 'Abdu'l-Bahá on several occasions demonstrated the esteem in which He held him. It seemed to the delighted pilgrim that the Master fulfilled, one by one, his hidden wishes without their having to be expressed: while strolling in the garden surrounding the Shrine of the Báb he received from the hand of Shoghi Effendi a Tablet revealed specially for Mírzá Ilyás from 'Abdu'l-Bahá; he was photographed with the Master and other members of the Holy Family; and he was summoned by the Master who invited him to be seated while He dictated to His secretary a Tablet in which He bestowed upon the awe-struck pilgrim the name 'Missaghiyeh' (Míthaqíyih), or 'firmness'. Henceforth he adopted as his first name "Abdu'l-Missagh" ('Abdu'l-Míthaq), or 'servant of the Covenant'. Thus he indicated his humble dedication to the Master Who was the Centre of the Covenant. Yet another wish was fulfilled during this pilgrimage: Abdu'l-Missagh was entrusted with a mission by his Beloved, that of returning to Írán via Egypt and India and placing into the hands of their recipients the Tablets

addressed to them by 'Abdu'l-Bahá and which were eagerly awaited following the break in communications caused by the first World War. One can easily guess what ineffable joy flooded his being as a result of having received so many honours and favours from the beloved Master! Nor had the bounties ceased: before his departure 'Abdu'l-Bahá gave him a gold coin which was to become, in Abdu'l-Missagh's mind, the symbolic basis of his personal capital.

In Írán he continued to work tirelessly in service to the Faith and the friends. He married Maryam Khánum, a charitable and generous lady, who was the daughter of Khájih Rabbí', and from this union one daughter and three sons were born. He settled in Tihrán and worked in real estate. His business became very successful and prosperous and soon he became widely known and highly respected throughout the community as a businessman. Those who worked for him or had dealings with him also appeared to attract prosperity to their affairs. Abdu'l-Missagh attributed this success to the coin he had received from the hands of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. However, his professional activities did not prevent him from serving the Faith. He was elected several times to membership on the National Spiritual Assembly, and the Local Spiritual Assembly of Tihrán, and he served on various committees. In about 1940 he built the hospital that he offered to the Bahá'í community of Írán.¹ Until the end of his life he contributed to the development and enlargement of the Missaghiyeh Hospital and Maternity Clinic, one of the most important and best equipped in the Iranian capital. Soon a school for nurses and later a home for the aged were created as auxiliaries of the hospital. These institutions to which persons of all backgrounds were admitted, sometimes free of charge, were 'silent teachers', the only Bahá'í-operated service institutions with which Iranians of all religions had a relationship. Abdu'l-Missagh took a deep personal interest in the hospital and his generosity made it unnecessary for appeals to be made for the purchase of new equipment or to meet deficits in the operating costs.

During the ministry of Shoghi Effendi, Abdu'l-Missagh was privileged to make pilgrimages in 1927 and 1952. During his second pilgrimage he fell ill as soon as he arrived in Haifa. The beloved Guardian himself came to visit him. Moved by this great honour, Abdu'l-Missagh recited these verses: 'If it is you who, as a compassionate physician, comes to my bedside, I would not give to anyone the pleasure of being ill!' On the occasion of his second pilgrimage the Guardian entrusted him with the mission of transferring the

¹ See Írán, pers³cution des Bahá'ís: un livre blanc (Paris: National Spiritual Assembly of France, 1982), p. 61.

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remains of Mírzá Akhavan-I Safá from the cemetery in which they were laid to the shrine of the martyrs Sultán'u'l-Shudadá and Mahbúb'u'l-Shuhadá in Isfahán.[sic]

In addition to the services he rendered as a member of Bahá'í institutions and through the teaching trips he made throughout Írán offering encouragement to the friends, he made generous gifts of funds which made possible the

acquisition of lands and buildings for the Faith in Asia, Europe and Africa. These gifts were made without ostentation, often without even his family being informed and in many cases in response to Shoghi Effendi's wishes. Although it is impossible to compile a complete record, his munificence can be glimpsed by mentioning that in Africa alone he had up to 1958 purchased no less than forty-four Temple sites, Teaching Institutes, Bahá'í Centres and other sites. This very generous man was, however, sparing with himself, residing in a simple house and living a modest life. As to his wife, Maryam, she was the refuge of needy people, finding jobs for some and personally supplying the needs of others. When Abdu'l-Missagh was asked why he did not spend a little more money on himself, he answered: 'This money does not belong to me, it belongs to 'Abdu'l-Bahá; I am only giving it back to Him!' It might be said that Abdu'l-Missagh was 'poor for himself and rich for the Faith'

On 21 November 1981 he passed away in Tihrán at the age of ninety-one. The members of his family residing outside Írán were honoured by being informed of his passing by the Universal House of Justice in a cable addressed to the National Spiritual Assembly of France on 25 November:

KINDLY INFORM ROSHAN MAVADDAT GRIEVED NEWS PASSING ABDOLMISSAGH MISSAGHIEH STEADFAST DEVOTED PROMOTER FAITH WHOSE MANIFOLD SERVICES SPIRITUAL HUMANITARIAN FIELDS LOVINGLY REMEMBERED. ASSURE RELATIVES FRIENDS FERVENT PRAYERS SACRED THRESHOLD PROGRESS SOUL ABHA KINGDOM.

(Adapted from a memoir by ROSHAN MAVADDAT)

ZHÍNÚS NI'MAT MAHMÚDÍ

1928-1981

Picture in Upper Right Corner with the Caption: Zhínús Ni'mat Mahmúdí

Zhínús Ni'mat Mahmúdí was born into a distinguished Bahá'í family in Tihrán on 7 August 1928, a fifth-generation Bahá'í on both sides.

In October 1947, at age nineteen, Zhínús married Húshang Mahmúdí, age twenty-two, whom she had come to know through their participation in Bahá'í activities of the community of Tihrán. At the time of their marriage they were both undergraduate students at Tihrán University where Húshang studied law and Zhínús physics. Bound together by an intense love for the Blessed Beauty which characterized their lives, and by a common desire to serve His Cause, they reinforced and encouraged each other's love, devotion and service to their beloved Faith for over thirty years, and finally, one following the other, both trod the crimson path of sacrifice and attained the station of martyrdom.

While still a young man, Húshang spent some time as a Bahá'í teacher in the village of Námaq, Khurasán, where he had a dream which he described in a letter to Shoghi Effendi. He dreamed that he was fortunate

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enough to catch a ring which the beloved Guardian had cast into the midst of a group of joyously vying Bahá'í youth who had gathered in a green field. In a

letter written on the Guardian's behalf by his secretary on 21 June 1944, Shoghi Effendi praised Húshang's services, assured him of great success in his teaching efforts, and encouraged him to 'remain steadfast in order to win the prize and achieve brilliant victories'.

Zhínús received her formal education in Tihrán, excelling as a student throughout her school years. She received her B.Sc. and M.Sc. in physics from Tihrán University, specializing in atmospheric sciences and meteorology and graduating with honours at the top of her class. She started her career at age twenty-three as the first woman meteorologist of Írán. By this time she had two small children. Later she served as the head of the Atmospheric and Climate Research Department of Írán and finally was appointed as Director-General of the country's Department of Meteorology. She was at the same time President of the Iranian School of Meteorology, a school that was founded through her efforts in order to make Írán self-sufficient in training meteorologists. She also taught at Tihrán University. It is significant to observe that in the 1950s when Zhínús began her career the science of meteorology in Írán was in its infancy; no research or development took place and the country did not even have a Department of Meteorology. It was largely through the dedicated and ceaseless work of Zhínús over twenty-five years that Írán's Department of Meteorology was founded and began to take a leading role in this area of endeavour in the Middle East. She devoted fifteen years to researching Írán's physical geography and its relationship to industrial and agricultural activities, a study which led to publication of her monumental work Geographical Atlas of Írán which became an indispensable tool in the planning of industrial and economic development projects. She was also the first Iranian to conduct research into the potential use of solar energy and often represented her country at international conferences on climatology and meteorology where she presented papers on various subjects including air pollution.

The leading scientist in her field in Írán, Zhínús was recognized and admired throughout the government for her contributions to that field and for her high degree of personal integrity. She was much loved and respected by her subordinates who observed her humanity and selfless service and who competed with one another in serving her, and by many foreign scientists who worked with her during her tenure in the government. To these visitors she came to represent, through her exceptional intellectual and moral qualities, a hope for the advancement of Írán. Among the many honours conferred upon her was the Royal Medal of Írán. She also served on various humanitarian organizations including the Women's Liberation Organization and the Zonta Club and served as head of the Dayhím Peace Committee.

To appreciate her professional achievements and her contribution to her country it is important to consider the odds against which she was working, given the existing conditions and standards of Írán, and to recognize the obstacles she faced as a woman with no 'connections' and as a Bahá'í with impeccable moral standards. Only her intellectual abilities, perseverance, sincerity of motive

and, above all, her strong conviction that as a Bahá'í she had an obligation to contribute towards the advancement of her nation, enabled her to meet and overcome the obstacles confronting her.

In the 1970s when she became eligible for retirement Zhínús yearned to devote all her time and energy to the service of the Faith but her attempts to retire were blocked by the authorities who considered her services indispensable to the welfare of the country. And so she stayed on only to be dismissed later by the Revolutionary Government for being a Bahá'í. She was denied a pension and her bank accounts were seized.

Zhínús's professional activities at no time interfered with her active service to the Faith or her role as a mother. She was an active member of the Bahá'í community of Tihrán from her youth and served on numerous committees including the Committee for the Advancement of Women. She and her husband spent the year 1955 in Kirmán as pioneers, returning in 1956 to Tihrán. In 1961 they settled with their three small children in Nármak, a small town with a fanatical popu-

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lation situated on the eastern outskirts of Tihrán. Here their home became a centre of Bahá'í activities and they became pillars of strength to the newly-established Bahá'í community. They both served on the Local Spiritual Assembly of Nármak for five years, during which time they commuted daily to work in Tihrán. They left behind a strong and active Bahá'í community and returned to Tihrán in 1967. Zhínús was elected to the Local Spiritual Assembly of Tihrán and served as its secretary until 1971 when they moved westward with their son and settled in a newly-built, deeply religious town named Gawhar-Dasht. Soon the Local Spiritual Assembly was formed. This community, vital and active and filled with spirit, subsequently became a target for the enemies of the Cause. At least five of its original Local Assembly members were martyred in the period 1980-1982, a large number of Bahá'í families were forced to leave and still more were imprisoned. Until it was confiscated in 1981 the home of Zhínús and Húshang in Gawhar-Dasht continued to be of use to the Faith by serving as a shelter for Bahá'í refugees.

In 1977, the last year during which their lives were to be normal, Zhínús was appointed an Auxiliary Board member serving Tihrán, Hamadán, and the western region of Írán. In 1978 the situation of the Bahá'ís began to deteriorate. Húshang was a member of the National Spiritual Assembly and the couple's combined responsibilities demanded their full-time presence in Tihrán. They rented an apartment in the city where they spent most of their nights. Later, as the situation worsened, even the luxury of a semi-permanent home was denied them and for security reasons they spent every night in a different place. The only permanent features of their lives at this point were their agonies and hardships and a small suitcase which they carried with them everywhere and which contained the necessary personal items for prison.

In 1980, after the imprisonment of the Counsellor, Dr. Masih Farhangí, Zhínús accepted many of his duties and also attended most of the meetings of the National Spiritual Assembly. When she and Húshang parted on the morning of 21 August 1980 they did not know that they would never see one another again in this life. That evening while in their meeting the members of the National Spiritual Assembly and two Auxiliary Board members were abducted by the revolutionary guards and were never heard from again. Zhínús was to have been present at this meeting but for personal reasons did not attend and thus was, momentarily, spared. To the distress caused by the implications for the Bahá'í community of Írán of the arrest of the National Assembly was now added the agony of separation from her husband of thirty-three years. Zhínús endured her suffering with characteristic calm and continued her work. 'I do not permit myself anything but calm and laughter with the friends,' she wrote to her family in January. 'Missing you and anxiety affects me, and just then the phone may ring and my voice may not be reassuring enough ... '

Zhínús was elected to the next National Spiritual Assembly but retained her appointive offices as well. She served the Bahá'í community of Írán in these capacities until her arrest on 13 December 1981 following which no family member was permitted to see her. She was executed on 27 December 1981 together with seven other members of the National Assembly and buried in a common grave in a section of the Tihrán cemetery reserved for infidels. A cell-mate has reported that when Zhínús was informed by the revolutionary guards that she was to be transferred to Evin prison she exclaimed, 'I shall be very happy to make a pilgrimage to Evin prison where so many Bahá'ís have been martyred!' In a letter to her family written in June 1981 Zhínús had remarked, 'I only want you to know that I lack nothing. There is no sorrow — absolutely no difficulties. I am content, well, fortunate, assured, serene, full of energy and thankful. Whatever should happen, there could be nothing better ... '

A major contribution of Zhínús was the role-model she provided for women both within and without the Faith in illustrating in her own life the fine balance that may be achieved between spirit and intellect. She exemplified this balance through her nobility of character and her professional accomplishments. She was frequently in the public eye, interviewed on national television and interviewed by journalists as a 'pioneer' woman. Within the Bahá'í community, through her services as a teacher of Sunday School for

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over two decades and her service on women's committees, she touched countless lives and gave inspiration and a vision of their potential to rising generations of Bahá'í women.

Zhínús, cut down in her fifty-second year, left behind three children, her aged mother, a brother and sister, who pray to be worthy of her sacrifice.

(Adapted from a memoir by RAMNA MAHMÚDÍ and MEHRNOUSH NI'MAT)

SHÍRUKH AMÍR-KÍYÁ BAQÁ

1935-1982

Shídrukh Amír-Kíyá Baqá came of valiant stock. A paternal grandfather, Hájí Dáwúd Mítháqíyán, a prominent member of the Jewish community of Káshán, while still young accepted the Cause in that city and went on foot to the Holy Land to attain the Master's presence. 'Abdu'l-Bahá referred to him in a Tablet as 'Affectionate'. Later on, with his wife and some of his children, he pioneered for about twenty years in Palma, Spain, and was privileged to buy a plot of land in Madrid for the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár.

Picture in Lower Left Corner with the Caption: Shídrukh Amír-Kíyá Baqá

Another forebear, on the father's side, Mírzá Háshím, also embraced the Cause in Káshán at a time when the friends were being persecuted. He arose in their defence and protested to the Governor against the injustice and oppression, and was promptly locked up in prison himself. However, his wit and eloquence won him liberty. The Master addressed him as 'Zealous'.

A maternal grandfather, Hájí Dáwúd Iqrárí, of Káshán, accepted the Faith when young. His father and brother, too, embraced the Cause but none knew of the others' belief until they met at a Bahá'í meeting. Thereafter, they worked together in service to the Faith, entertaining the friends and guiding seekers to the Truth. They bought the impressive house of a high-ranking official with a view to holding befitting meetings therein to teach the Faith and, in this, they attained to their heart's desire. At one of these meetings they hoisted in front of the house a banner bearing the inscription Yá Bahá'u'l-Abhá, inviting friend and stranger to enter. The Master said they were hospitable and of noble aim and that He was well pleased with them.

Shídrukh, a granddaughter of these veterans, was born in Tihrán on 8 October 1935, the eldest daughter of Rúhu'lláh Mítháqíyán and Ruhníyyih Iqrárí, both faithful servants of the Faith. Shídrukh had three sisters and one brother and from an early age was deeply attached to the Cause and its institutions. She was fond of music and took piano lessons at school. She had a charming voice and was the first person in Írán to record a prayer, revealed by our beloved Guardian, to the accompaniment of the piano. It was highly approved by the Hands of the Cause and was played in many continental conferences and large Bahá'í gatherings in Írán. For a time she was on the national television network demonstrating cooking and other domestic courses. She knew English and was well-versed in some arts. At age sixteen Shídrukh was married to Manúchihir Baqá; one daughter and two sons were born of the union.

A visit to the Holy Land as a pilgrim reinvigorated her faith; she attended the International Conferences held in London,

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Palermo, Alaska, Paris and Brazil and had vivid recollections of them all.

While in the United States, two years ago, for her daughter's wedding, her children and sisters urged her not to return to Írán where her life would be

in danger, but she disregarded their plea. 'When our beloved Guardian exhorted us to pioneer,' she told them, 'we did not heed his call; we let ourselves down. Now that the Universal House of Justice bids us maintain our posts, will we desert them and fail a second time? Not I! I feel I am needed in Írán and return there to do what lies in my power, regardless of the consequences.' When the hour for departure arrived, she was overcome with emotion. She opened her prayer book and read prayers which brought solace to her heart and the strength and courage to continue on her course to her destined fate and eternal glory.

Though Írán was agitated and distress was rife, she stood firm as a rock, bringing the friends together in devotional meetings and restoring calm and tranquility to their disturbed hearts. She was ever ready to serve and was appointed on various committees. She was put in charge of organizing the Nineteen Day Feasts held in her district. This took up most of her evenings. She spoke to the friends of the need for steadfastness, courage and sacrifice in the path of the Beloved, conveyed to them the messages of the National Spiritual Assembly, and inspired them to be firm. Whenever news came of a martyrdom or some other affliction engulfing the Bahá'ís, she would expatiate on the glory of sacrifice, the station of the martyrs and the lustre which their deeds would shed on the pages of history.

The steadily mounting wave of oppression instigated by the authorities with a view to casting terror into the hearts of the believers, dampening their zeal and thus weakening the institutions of the Faith, was putting a heavy strain on the faith of some of the friends. At such a time of stress, Shídrúkh did not flinch or falter. With the utmost courage, she arranged meetings at her own home or at the homes of her sister or children who were all abroad. She attended to the bereaved families of the martyrs and offered them comfort and shelter. One of these was a Bahá'í woman from Yazd whom she lodged in her sister's home.

Shídrúkh was always very cautious in arranging Bahá'í meetings, and if she suspected any leak threatening the safety of a proposed meeting, she promptly switched it to the house of her sister or children. In spite of all her precautions, however, there came a night — Monday, 2 November 1981 — when, at the hour of nine, there was a knock on her door. The Local Spiritual Assembly of Tíhrán was in session at her home. She approached the door and asked who was knocking. The Bahá'í woman from Yazd answered, and recognizing her voice, Shídrúkh was reassured and opened the door. To her dismay, she found that the Bahá'í woman was not alone; armed guards of the Islamic Revolutionary Party accompanied her. What had transpired was this: at the home of Shídrúkh's sister was also a Muslim lodger, addicted to drugs, who made himself a nuisance to the neighbourhood. Shídrúkh had consulted the Local Spiritual Assembly about the advisability of evicting him on the ground of his failure to pay the rent but was asked to refrain from taking any action for the moment. It appears, however, that some of the neighbours had lodged a complaint against the man and the guards had come to investigate. They asked where the owner of the house was and the Bahá'í woman from Yazd, being simple, led them

to Shídrukh

The guards asked the six Assembly members in session. Shídrukh, her husband, the woman from Yazd and another Bahá'í (Firdawsí's son), there present, to accompany them. Aware that the National Spiritual Assembly members who had been asked to accompany a similar squad of guards had never been seen again, Shídrukh insisted that she would accompany them only to the police station situate in the same street. The wrangle attracted the neighbours, and faced with a not too friendly crowd, the guards complied with Shídrukh's wish. Once at the police station, however, the guards transported their captives to a prison. After some ten days, Firdawsí's son and the woman from Yazd were released, and the rest transferred to another jail noted for its severe discipline and the oppression inflicted by its warders.

The following account is based on reports

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by fellow prisoners, Bahá'í and non-Bahá'í, and Shídrukh's relatives who were witness to these incidents.

Time and again, the Revolutionary Committee put pressure upon her to recant her faith, holding out freedom as the reward. It was a serious life-and-death game, not a mock one. A letter to her sister a week before related her encounter with the authorities when she approached them on behalf of herself, her sisters and brother to clear up the matter of their inheritance from their father. 'What is your religion?' the President of the Court had asked, and she had replied that she was a Bahá'í. 'If you desire prosperity,' he had suggested, 'you had better recant your faith or you will experience serious loss.' 'Did you not hear,' she answered, 'what the old Bahá'í in Yazd said when such a proposition was put to him, that man of eighty summers whose head was repeatedly dashed to the ground to persuade him to comply with your demand? Did he not say: "What! Should I surrender my faith to secure some baubles?" I, too, tell you that I can do without my inheritance, if necessary.' The President said, 'You represent others who may not be of the same mind as you.' She replied, 'They are Bahá'ís, too, and none of them will barter the eternal world for this transitory one.' Having said this, she arose and, without waiting for permission from the Court, departed, leaving the President fuming with rage at his failure to turn her from her faith.

Shídrukh had for long prior to these events been engaged in committing to memory prayers and Tablets and passages from the Holy Writings. This she did in anticipation of the day when she might be confined somewhere without access to Bahá'í literature. Now, in prison, she could reap the reward of her foresight and draw on her memory for those priceless gems that were to delight, sustain and strengthen her.

Several times they told her that she could secure her freedom just by signing a paper. This was ostensibly to the effect that she would not participate any longer in any Bahá'í administrative activities, but she knew in reality it

was a ruse on the part of the authorities; if secured, that document would be given wide publicity as evidence of her recantation in an effort to demoralize the friends, weaken their resolve and undermine the institutions of the Faith.

While she was in jail, the authorities confiscated her property as well as that belonging to her deceased parents, her sisters, her brother and her children who were all abroad and whom she represented legally.

During one of the interrogations, Shídrukh came face to face with her husband who was also in prison. He told her that he had signed the paper presented to him and was to be freed. 'For the sake of our children,' he said, 'you, too, sign it and secure your freedom.' She pressed his hand and merely said, 'Steadfastness! Steadfastness!' and was sorrowful, wondering what contrivance had brought about his defection.

According to her sister, Shídrukh was permitted to make one short telephone call to her relatives a few days prior to her martyrdom. She told them not to be concerned about her.

A non-Bahá'í who was immured for three days with that group said, on release, how the morale of them all had been sustained by the courageous spirit and uplifting words of Shídrukh — 'With such faith and steadfastness and zeal animating her, you should have no fear for her,' we were assured.

On 4 January 1982, Shídrukh and the six members of the Local Spiritual Assembly of Tíhrán were secretly executed, this information being obtained fortuitously by their relatives and friends. No will or document exists to attest to her martyrdom although it was reported that she and the members of the Local Spiritual Assembly had decided to write their wills. The authorities were not prepared to deliver her body and, later, a demand seems to have been made for five hundred thousand túmáns [in excess of \$50,000 U.S.] apiece for every will they would hand over. Since their wishes and intentions were known and their deeds and words were testimony to the unity, the greatness and glory of God, there was nothing further that could be gleaned from their wills. It is said that all these prisoners were buried unwashed, in the clothes they were wearing, and without any funeral rites, in a common grave.

As far as is known, Shídrukh is the first Bahá'í woman of Jewish extraction to lay down her life for the Faith. A year prior to her martyrdom, she requested the prayers of the

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Universal House of Justice for steadfastness in the Faith for herself and her sisters and brother, and for the progress of her father's soul in the realms above. She withstood all tests and trials and never faltered until she attained the glorious station of martyrdom. She advanced with arms extended wide to embrace the darts of sacrifice and gave her life joyously for her belief. Her daughter and two sons, her three sisters and brother, all firm and active in the Faith, endure this tragic blow confident that the precious blood so willingly shed on Írán's soil for the love of the Glory of God will not be in

vain and that every drop will raise a thousand lovers to serve the Cause of God and His people.

Shídrukh was a loving mother, an affectionate sister, a trustworthy companion, a faithful mate, a gracious hostess, a true Bahá'í.

In response to an enquiry from the National Spiritual Assembly of Canada the Universal House of Justice cabled on 14 January 1982:

MARTYRDOM SHIDRUKH AMIR-KIYA WIFE MANUCHIHR BAQA SIGNIFICANT. SHE AND HUSBAN WERE HOSTS LOCAL ASSEMBLY TIHRAN WHEN THEIR HOME RAIDED AND BOTH WERE ARRESTED ALONG WITH SIX MEMBERS ASSEMBLY. AS IN OTHER CASES PRESSURE WAS BROUGHT RECALCITRANT TO FAITH SAVE LIVES. UNFORTUNATELY APPEARS HUSBAND DID NOT STAND TEST AND AS PUBLISHED NEWSPAPERS RENOUNCED FAITH AND WAS IMMEDIATELY RELEASED. HE INCREASED PRESSURE HIS WIFE SHIDRUKH BY PLEADING HER FOLLOW HIM. SHE CHOSE CROWN OF MARTYRDOM REFUSED BETRAY HER FAITH AND JOINED RANKS IMMORTALS. HISTORY WILL EVER EXTOL EXEMPLARY COURAGE RESOLUTE FAITH ONE WHO SACRIFICED HER LIFE AT THRESHOLD HER BELOVED. (Translated from the Persian by RUSTOM SABIT)

APPU RAMAN

1921-1982

Appu Raman was born in Colombo, Sri Lanka, on 21 December 1921 and came to Malaya in 1928. It has been said of him that he seemed to have been born with a burning desire to serve humanity. His association with the Ministry of Welfare Services began in 1946 and he continued his dedicated services to the poor and needy through this Department until his retirement in 1976, during which time he held many important posts and initiated a number of societies including the Self-Reliant Society, the Association for the Physically Handicapped, the Association for the Mentally Retarded and a host of others.

Picture in Upper Right Corner with the Caption: Appu Raman

His Bahá'í life began in 1962. He accepted the Faith through Mrs. Theresa Chee. On the auspicious occasion, when asked what his life ambition was, not having anything in particular to say, he pointed to a picture of the Bahá'í Temple in Wilmette and said, 'Perhaps all I want is to visit that Temple!' He was granted the bounty of visiting the Mother Temple of the West three times and of visiting the Holy Places in Írán, as well. In 1965 he was elected a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Malaysia and continued to serve on that body until 1972 in which year he was elected chairman. In the early years of the Faith in Malaysia he was instrumental in establishing the national Hazíratu'l-Quds. In his teaching work he was recognized as a scholar of Hinduism and was popular among the Tamil believers because of his eloquence and his depth of knowledge of both their

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language and culture. In his final years he became actively involved in the Ulu Langat Local Spiritual Assembly and the project assigned to it by the National Spiritual Assembly, that of developing the Balakong Summer School land.

In late December 1981 Mr. Raman started off on a four-month teaching trip which was to take him to Thailand, Burma, Bangladesh, India and Sri Lanka but he ascended to the Abhá Kingdom on 5 January 1982 at Rangoon, Burma. His sudden death came as a shock to the Malaysian community and his loss was felt equally keenly by the believers in Burma who had grown close to his radiant personality. More than five hundred friends from all parts of Burma gathered at the funeral. The National Spiritual Assembly of Burma reported that the Faith had not been so well proclaimed in that land since the days of the Hand of the Cause of God Mustafá Rúmí. As the two rows of Burmese friends, with tears in their eyes, carried Mr. Raman's body from the hearse to the grave, they realized that through him a permanent bond had been established between the community of the Greatest Name in Burma and Malaysia. The energy he devoted to the Faith and his obedience to its principles, laws and ordinances are but small examples of the love he had for Bahá'u'lláh. May the Blessed Beauty accept his loyal services at His Holy Threshold. Mr. Raman leaves behind his wife, Mrs. Thanapakian Raman, and five children.

On 8 January 1982 the Universal House of Justice cabled to the National Spiritual Assembly of Burma expressing the hope that the example of this DEVOTED SERVANT would inspire the beloved friends in that country to INTENSIFY THEIR RESOLVE in service to the Faith. The friends in Malaysia received the following cable:

GRIEVED PASSING DEVOTED SERVANT BHAULLAH APPU RAMAN IN BURMA. HIS SACRIFICE FIELD SERVICE BHAULLAH SHEDS LUSTRE YOUR COMMUNITY WHICH MAY WELL BE PROUD SPIRITUAL VICTORIES ACHIEVED BY ITS NUMEROUS DISTINGUISHED MEMBERS MANY FIELDS BAHAI SERVICE. ASSURE RELATIVES FRIENDS ARDENT PRAYERS PROGRESS HIS SOUL.

FLORENCE ELIZABETH ALTASS
1884-1982

Picture in Upper Right Corner with the Caption: Florence Elizabeth Altass

Florence Elizabeth Altass was born on 13 May 1884 at Aldeburgh in Suffolk, England, and was one of a family of nine children. Slight in build and small in stature, she had an irresistible charisma. She was blessed with amazing perception of others' needs and she literally sparkled her way through life until the very day she passed on to the Abhá Kingdom on 22 January 1982, at nearly ninety-eight years of age.

Florence's upbringing was strictly Catholic but she never felt that that was where she 'belonged'. During her teens she travelled to Edinburgh to stay with a school friend, Kathleen Flemming. She attended her first Bahá'í meeting with Kathleen and immediately identified with the Bahá'í ideals. Although she attended Bahá'í meetings subsequently and always considered herself a Bahá'í, she did not formally declare her belief in written form until many years later. Having broken away from the Catholic Faith and the authoritarian upbringing of her mother, she feared that by signing a declaration of belief she would in some obscure way limit herself; yet as early

as her twenty-first year when she left home for good and enrolled for nursing training she identified herself as a Bahá'í on the application form and throughout her life associated with the Bahá'í community.

As a young girl Florence longed to become a missionary. To fulfill this dream she felt that she must take up nursing and that the more difficult aspects of this field would best prepare her. She persuaded a friend of her father's, a doctor, to assist her. She completed a course that covered caring for mental patients and maternity cases, the latter at a London hospital where prostitutes, indigents and the homeless were treated. Here Florence's compassion and love for her fellow-kind expanded to an extent she had not dreamed of: the cases she described made one's heart ache for the plight of humanity. Slowly her aspirations towards the missionary field changed. She concluded her training with a three-year general course at the London Middlesex Hospital.

Her first assignment was to the Austrian Imperial court of the House of Habsburg to nurse a lady-in-waiting. Florence was well liked by the Archduke Franz-Ferdinand and the Archduchess and she became very fond of them. The sympathy she felt with them as strict Catholics enabled Florence to express many of her 'Bahá'í ideas'. She did not approve of the crucifixes in every room, and declared 'The God I pray to is a living God, not a dead Christ on a cross'. When she left his service the Archduke presented her with a rosary of carnelian which had at the end, instead of a crucifix, a medallion inscribed with the date, and the madonna and child.

From Austria Florence travelled to Budapest where she tried to learn more about her father's family, who were Austrian. (In later years Florence was one of the first Western women to cross Russia on the Trans-Siberian Railway, and in 1917 she returned from there when the fall of the Czar was imminent.) Meanwhile she returned to the United Kingdom and, as always, she felt drawn to Scotland where she attended Bahá'í meetings at the home of Dr. and Mrs. Alexander Whyte. Dr. Whyte was a prominent minister of the United Free Church of Scotland. The manse at 7 Charlotte Square, the home of Dr. and Mrs. Whyte, was attached to St. George's United Free Church which is now known as West Register House. 'Abdu'l-Bahá was invited to Edinburgh by the Whytes during the course of His visit to the West and remained in that city from 6 to 10 January 1913. During this sojourn Florence had the bounty of meeting 'Abdu'l-Bahá at the Whyte's home, although she was not aware that He was to be present. In a recorded interview in later years she recalled, 'Of course when I saw Him I knew who He was. Oh, you couldn't mistake Him. And that heavenly smile! It was a perpetual smile, and yet it wasn't, if you can imagine; it looked as though He smiled at everyone, and yet the smile seemed always to be there. And His eyes looked as if they were looking through you. He had the most gentle voice; I've never heard a voice like it. I would like to hear it again. He embraced a good many people; He didn't me. He just shook hands. Several of us He just shook hands with.' Florence wrote of that meeting: 'When 'Abdu'l-Bahá shook hands with me,

He seemed to transmit something to me, and I've never been the same since . . .
'1 Asked if He spoke in English at all, Florence laughingly replied, 'No. There was an interpreter — who spoilt the whole show! It wasn't that his voice didn't suit me, it was that although 'Abdu'l-Bahá spoke in Persian, you understood; you knew what He was saying, somehow. One was so enamoured of His voice that one sort of felt what He was saying. It was as though He delivered His address in English, although He spoke Persian.' So great was the throng seeking admittance to the presence of the Master that Florence refrained from attending subsequent meetings though she was strongly drawn to do so and regretted to the end of her days the loss occasioned by her extraordinary courtesy and consideration for others. Her one meeting with 'Abdu'l-Bahá formed the theme of many of her poems which she continued to write till the end of her life.²

Ever after having met the Master, Florence felt His presence and inspiration. She asked that she should be a 'channel for healing'. Before treating a patient she always prayed and seemed inspired with 'the right means'. In spite of her orthodox medical training,

1 See U.K. Bahá'í Journal, February/March 1967, for a fuller account of this meeting.

2 See The Bahá'í World, vol. XVII, p. 650.

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Florence (a vegetarian), held strong views about 'natural healing' and refused ever to administer drugs. Although she met with strong opposition in the orthodox field she persevered with her intuition which she felt came from an 'inner knowledge'. She worked closely with a number of doctors of similar convictions and often recalled the numerous occasions on which patients, officially diagnosed as hopeless cases, would come to them as a last resort and make seemingly miraculous recoveries. 'Given the right conditions,' she explained simply, 'the body heals itself. Healing is on three planes — mental, spiritual and physical.' Seriously ill only twice in her life, at the ages of seventy and ninety-five, Florence was always alert, vivacious and energetic, a living example of her convictions.

Florence was never in one place long and in moving around continually in her various nursing jobs she influenced the lives of many people. Even during the period when I knew her, beginning about 1974, she would not miss an opportunity to mention the Faith to those she met. She attracted into her confidence young and old alike. Numerous friends, Bahá'í and not, sought her advice and she always responded with perception and deep wisdom. It was during one of her illnesses, when she was about seventy, that she finally affixed her name to a declaration card, though she professed amazement at having done so when she saw herself listed as a declared believer in the Bahá'í Journal; but once recovered and now 'declared' she found to her astonished delight that the step she had taken did not limit her. 'Now I know what it's really like to be limited,' she would remark during her last years when her vision and hearing

began to fail. But these were merely physical limitations, and very different than those which her free spirit had feared. Her last ten years were spent in vegetarian homes in Horsham and then in Hastings where she was allowed to remain in spite of difficulties of vision and hearing which would normally have qualified her for residence in a nursing home. Florence never lost her valiant spirit of independence. Residents of the home marvelled at her versatility and activeness, and remarked that 'something was missing' whenever she was away. She served on the Local Spiritual Assemblies of Horsham and Hastings and as the only English Bahá'í in Hastings she often found herself with the responsibility of conveying to enquirers the tenets of the Faith. Her presentation always made a profound impression on those who met her. 'Age has restricted my activities,' she wrote to a friend in 1981, 'but has not affected my love and devotion to the Faith or my gratitude for being allowed to meet the Master and to hear His voice, a voice like no other one would hear again.' She was humorous to the end, mentioning in one of her letters that she would rejoice to be reunited with 'Abdu'l-Bahá in the spiritual realm but feared that she had been 'in queue so long He may have forgotten me'.

Three of Florence's life ambitions were fulfilled in the years following her ninetieth birthday: she made a pilgrimage to the Bahá'í Shrines in the Holy Land in 1978; she found that her intuitive understanding of healing was confirmed in a number of the Master's Tablets published by the Universal House of Justice in 1978 under the title Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá; and her wish to see Bahá'ís in the medical field 'get together to share ideas' was realized in June 1980 when the first International Bahá'í Conference on Health and Healing was held in Ottawa under the auspices of the Association for Bahá'í Studies.¹ Unable to attend, though she had hoped to, Florence submitted a paper which was well received.

Florence recorded in her poems and written fragments of prose her visionary thoughts and ideals. We are fortunate to have these, together with the example of her dedicated life of service, as an inspiration for generations to come. The tribute accorded this unassuming believer by the Universal House of Justice in its cable of 1 February 1982 to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United Kingdom would have astonished one who never felt worthy of the bounty of having gazed but once upon the face of the Centre of the Covenant:

PASSING FLORENCE ALTASS SEVERS ONE MORE PRECIOUS LINK BRITISH COMMUNITY
HISTORIC VISIT MASTER. HER DEDICATION STEADFAST FAITH COLOURFUL LIFE ENRICH
ANNALS THAT COMMUNITY. ASSURE PRAYERS PROGRESS HER SOUL ABHA KINGDOM. CECILIA
SMITH

¹ For a report of this gathering see p. 201.

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NASROLLAH MAVADDAT

(NASRU'LLÁH MAVIDDAT)

1897-1982

Picture in Upper Left Corner with the Caption: Nasrollah Mavaddat

CONVEY SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY CAMPBELLTOWN GRIEVE PASSING DEDICATED SERVANT NASROLLAH MAVADDAT WHOSE EXEMPLARY DEVOTION LIFELONG SERVICES CAUSE AND LITERARY ACHIEVEMENTS LOVINGLY REMEMBERED ASSURE RELATIVES FRIENDS PRAYERS H SHRINES PROGRESS HIS SOUL. Universal House of Justice, 8 April 1982

Nasru'lláh Maviddat, though humble and self-effacing, was known to and loved and respected by many throughout the Bahá'í world. He was born in Tihrán, Írán, in 1897 and passed away in Adelaide, Australia, on 7 April 1982. He lived every moment of his life for the Faith and in its service. His great-grandfather was a devoted Bábí and both his parents were Bahá'ís. As a child he diligently followed his studies to the highest level available at the time and was then appointed to teach at Tarbíyat Bahá'í School. His thirst for knowledge and his devotion to his work touched the hearts of his students and colleagues alike and won him many admirers.

Mr. Maviddat was among the first group of young Iranian students to be selected for technical training in the United States under a programme in which the Iranian government was collaborating with a major American industrial complex. On his way to America he broke his journey in Beirut in order to visit the Holy Shrines in Haifa. While in the Holy Land he had the bounty of meeting the beloved Guardian. The two years he spent in the United States provided an opportunity to participate in the activities of the American Bahá'ís and to enrich his experience in Bahá'í administration. On his return from America his heart was filled with joy and gratitude on being able to visit Shoghi Effendi for the second time.

Back in his homeland he lived in Tihrán for several years and served the Faith tirelessly as a member of the Local Spiritual Assembly and many local and national committees. In particular he was appointed to a small committee formed for translating the Guardian's messages received in the English language or other Bahá'í materials in that tongue. In addition he taught at Summer Schools, conducted classes for youth and became a speaker and teacher of the Faith.

In 1956 he pioneered to the south of France where he quickly perfected his knowledge of French and participated in the activities of the friends of that region. When Shoghi Effendi passed away he began the difficult task of translating *God Passes By* from English to Persian. He worked arduously on that book for several years, seeking to be faithful both to the style of Shoghi Effendi's own writings in Persian and to the words and expressions used in the Bahá'í Writings. That he successfully achieved his purpose to a very great extent is attested by many. His deep knowledge of Bahá'í literature was a considerable aid in identifying and locating original Persian texts for the numerous quotations Shoghi Effendi used from the three Central Figures. He thus avoided, apart from a few exceptions, retranslation of the original passages to Persian.

In 1968 Mr. Maviddat was asked by the Universal House of Justice to help with

the work at the World Centre where he spent three years assisting the Research Department in codifying and indexing the Bahá'í Writings. When his wife developed asthma

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and was advised to reside in a more favourable climate they left the Holy Land with keen regret. Mr. Maviddat continued to the end of his life to translate and write. He translated into Persian Shoghi Effendi's *The Advent of Divine Justice*, as well as numerous letters, cables and compilations. He also wrote in Persian an introductory book on the Faith. His last few years were spent in Australia. With the persecution and apparent suppression of the Faith in Írán, and its manifest progress in Australia and the Pacific, he would often quote Bahá'u'lláh's words about His Revelation that should they attempt to conceal its light on the continent, it will assuredly rear its head in the midmost heart of the ocean, and, raising its voice, proclaim: 'I am the life-giver of the world!'

We cannot conclude this short biography of Mr. Maviddat without mention of his wife, Talí'ih 'Alá'í, who was his companion for more than half a century and who, with her kind nature, faith and perseverance gave him total love, devotion and wholehearted encouragement in completing his work.

After his departure from this world the above cable was communicated by the Universal House of Justice, thus crowning his achievements with words of love and appreciation from that august Institution.

RAFIE MAVADDAT

ARDESHIR ROSTAMPOUR

(ARDASHÍR RUSTAMPÚR)

1901-1982

Picture in Upper Right Corner with the Caption: Ardeshir Rostampour

Ardeshir Rostampour was born of Zoroastrian parents in the village of Kuche Buyuk, near Yazd, Írán. He was a small child when his father died. His father had taken two wives, and Ardeshir's mother, the second wife, was both mute and deaf. 'The two of us were left dependent upon my half-brother,' Ardeshir related. 'I lived with my mother and worked as a servant for my half-brother; he was a very rough man and used me as a slave. I gradually became dissatisfied with my life. When I was about ten years old I learned that a caravan, bound for Bombay, was passing not far from our village. Through the use of sign language I conveyed to my mother my wish to escape my miserable existence and go to India where I hoped to earn some money to make life easier for her. She granted her consent, we took tearful leave of one another and I set off, taking as provision for my journey my meagre savings amounting to about the equivalent of one dollar, and five pieces of dried bread which I wrapped in a handkerchief. For two days and two nights I wandered alone in the desert in search of the caravan, vainly asking every passerby if he knew of its

whereabouts. Finally I caught sight of it when it stopped for the evening. I was invited to join the caravan through the kindness of some people from my village who were travelling with it, one of whom, a Zoroastrian lady who had been a teacher in our village, engaged me as a servant and compensated me handsomely for my services. Through her generosity I was able to travel by steamer to Karachi where I found employment. I used to send all I had earned to my mother, asking her to distribute whatever she would not need herself to the needy ones in our village. Later on I managed to go on to Bombay, and after a while I came to Hyderabad, Sind, where I opened a restaurant. I have stayed here ever since.'

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From his earnings in the restaurant, Ardeshir made gifts to his village, establishing first a long-needed cemetery for the Zoroastrian community and later a reservoir to provide drinking water. Two entrances and taps were provided, one for Zoroastrians and one for Muslims, since custom would not allow them to share, and it was his wish that all might benefit equally from the facility.

Through meeting early distinguished Bahá'í teachers, including Mr. Shahríyár Yazdání, Mr. Isfandíyár Bakhtíyárí¹ and Mr. Pritam Singh,² who frequented his restaraunt when they travelled to Hyderabad on teaching trips, Ardeshir became attracted to the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh and embraced it. He was a generous host to travelling teachers and enquirers, often accomodating eighteen or twenty guests and arranging personally for their food and comfort. On one occasion Miss Martha Root was an overnight guest.

Ardeshir's Bahá'í life was lived entirely in the spirit of the words of Shoghi Effendi who encouraged the believers to be 'like the fountain or spring that is continually emptying itself of all it has and is continually being refilled from an invisible source. To be continually giving out for the good of our fellows undeterred by the fear of poverty and reliant on the unfailing bounty of the Source of all wealth and all good — this is the secret of right living.'³ He lived a simple life in Spartan surroundings and he gave spontaneously, generously and continually in support of Bahá'í undertakings. A contribution he had made was the means of acquiring the land for the Temple in India early in the Ten Year Crusade. Learning that the National Spiritual Assembly had found a suitable site for the construction of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár but lacked the funds to acquire it he immediately donated his entire savings. Only through strenuous insistence did the representatives of the National Spiritual Assembly succeed in persuading him to accept back a small amount for his own use. When he was asked on one occasion how he could give all of his money with no thought for himself he replied, 'I did not have a penny when I started. All that I had accumulated was given to me by God. Now He needed the money. I said to myself, If He needs the money, I will return all of it to Him. If I am supposed to have money, He will provide me with more, and if I am not supposed to have it, He would take back what I had anyway. Therefore, it was easy. I did it with full confidence and a joyful conscience. He has

repaid me many times since then and I always returned it to Him, as I am only a temporary trustee.'

It has been written of Ardeshir Rostampour: 'Never one to seek honour for himself, his services have been rendered so quietly as to have been almost unknown and invisible to all but those members of the institutions of the Faith who received his many contributions. He has given as 'Abdu'l-Bahá had always done, in such a way that the right hand was unaware of what the left hand was doing. When Ardeshir said of himself, "I have given everything I have made to the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh," it was a stark, matter-of-fact and unadorned description of his life, without a trace of personal pride or self-praise.'

When his passing on 11 April 1982 was announced, the Universal House of Justice cabled:

ASSURE RELATIVES FRIENDS ARDESHIR ROSTAMPOUR ARDENT PRAYERS PROGRESS SOUL ABH KINGDOM. HIS EXEMPLARY DEVOTION AND DETACHMENT UNFORGETTABLE. (Based on a memoir by DR. IRAJ AYMAN and CHARLES NOLLEY)

SULIANA HALAHOLO KOREAN
1950-1982

Early on a sunny April morning, in 1982, Bahá'ís of the Western Pacific gathered on a lovely knoll in Saipan, Mariana Islands, overlooking the blue Pacific, to pay their last respects to beloved Suliana Korean. Throughout her thirty-one years, she was an example of strength and courage, and of dedicated service to the Cause of God.

Born Suliana Halaholo on Tonga in 1950, she began attending Bahá'í children's classes at the age of eight. She studied with joy and was soon herself teaching classes. Her involvement in administrative activities began

1 See 'In Memoriam', The Bahá'í World, vol. XVI, p. 554.

2 See 'In Memoriam', The Bahá'í World, vol. XIII, p. 874.

3 From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi, cited in Bahá'í Procedure, pp. 8-9.

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Picture in Upper Left Corner with the Caption: Suliana Halaholo Korean

while she was still a youth. She was secretary of the youth committee of Tonga, and later of Fiji, where she attended the University of the South Pacific. She often made teaching trips to other islands, an activity in which she particularly delighted. Academically, also, she shone brilliantly. The government of Tonga sent her to study dietetics at the University of the South Pacific in Suva, Fiji, where she obtained her Bachelor's degree. Vacations from school were not vacations from Suliana's most loved work, service to the Faith. She devoted two of her vacations to translating into the Tongan language The Seven Valleys, and at a later time she translated Words of Wisdom. Both translations were approved by the National Spiritual Assembly of Tonga.

After graduating from university, Suliana married Dr. Masao Korean and settled on Ebeye in the Marshall Islands where she pursued her career and devoted herself to raising her children: Ruthann, Saane and Sultán. She learned Marshallese and continued to make teaching trips to the islands. In 1979 she was appointed an Auxiliary Board member for propagation of the Faith, and through her work for this institution all the Bahá'ís of the Western Pacific came to know and love her. Although she had no professional training in music she found time to learn to play string instruments. She sang and played at Bahá'í gatherings and proclamation events. It was her wish always to bring happiness wherever she was.

In June 1981 she moved with her family to Saipan. Shortly thereafter she was appointed to the Regional Teaching Committee for the northern Mariana Islands. However, at this time, tragedy struck. A brain tumor which had been operated on in 1979 began to create physical difficulties for her, although almost no one was aware of her discomfort and she continued to perform her duties. In December she participated in the dedication of the Bahá'í Center on Saipan, joining in the singing and dancing with the same fervor and joy as the other believers. It was perhaps her last public act. To the end, however, Suliana was aware of the love of the Bahá'í friends, and of the wonder of the Bahá'í teachings. Her talk, during the last month of her life, was of her beloved Cause of God. One week before her passing on 15 April 1982, five pioneer adults and three pioneer children arrived on Saipan, much to Suliana's joy. The people of Saipan said that their prayers had been answered with the arrival of the pioneers. Perhaps Suliana's special dedication was also in some way balanced at that time. But we know that no one will take her place. No one will carry such love to the islands.

At the time of Suliana's burial, Auxiliary Board member Marian Johnson said, 'To know Suliana was to know an angel.' If angel she is — and surely the Bahá'ís of the Western Pacific would agree — then her love and the example of her faith will always be with us. KATHY MILLHOFF

JULIUS HENSELER

1901-1982

Julius Henseler left this material world on 30 April 1982 after a short illness. The German Bahá'í community has lost a steadfast believer who was an example until his last breath. Doctors, nurses and attendants who treated him during his last illness considered him their favourite patient. He bore his suffering with patience and always had a smile and an expression of thanks for everyone who cared for him.

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Picture in Upper Left Corner with the Caption: Julius Henseler

Julius Henseler heard about the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh in 1921 through a friend who told him that 'Abdu'l-Bahá had passed away. Julius was then twenty years old and was known as a seeker among his friends. He attended many Bahá'í

functions in Esslingen and Stuttgart and embraced the Cause, developing an unbounded love for Bahá'u'lláh, 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi.

With a saddened heart, but obedient to the Bahá'í institutions, he suspended his teaching activities during the period of proscription under Hitler. These were years of crucial importance when he was confined to living the Bahá'í life within his family circle consisting of his wife and two children. Cut off from the World Centre and without the guidance of the National Spiritual Assembly, he and his wife Anna remained loyal servants of the Covenant of God. After the war, when the Bahá'í institutions had to be rebuilt, he dedicated himself wholeheartedly to this task. From 1949 to 1954 he was a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Germany and Austria, and served as its treasurer from time to time. He extended a special love to Bahá'í youth. Himself the father of two youths, he enkindled in them a love of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh and fostered their spiritual growth.

At age seventy, in response to the call of the Universal House of Justice, he arose to pioneer for one year in Innsbruck, Austria, where he was reunited with Dr. Ahmedazdeh and Mrs. von Werthern with whom he had served on the National Spiritual Assembly many years before. This was a highlight of his life for he was once more in a position to devote all his energies to the Faith which he loved above all else.

'I am leaving this world in peace. I am at peace with everyone and hold no grudge against anyone. I have already seen 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the Master.' These were some of the last words he spoke to his family.

On 3 May 1982 the Universal House of Justice cabled Anna Henseler:

EXTEND LOVING SYMPATHY YOURSELF AND FAMILY PASSING YOUR DEAR HUSBAND. HIS SERVICES CAUSE GOD GERMANY UNFORGETTABLE. PRAYING HOLY SHRINES PROGRESS HIS SOUL ABHA KINGDOM.

In a cablegram sent to the National Spiritual Assembly of Germany on the same date the House of Justice expressed its sorrow at the passing of this DEARLY-LOVED STALWART SERVANT of the Faith. The German Bahá'í community will always remember him.

ASANAND CHAGLA JOSHI

1910-1982

Know thou that the souls of the people of Bahá, who have entered and been established within the Crimson Ark, shall associate and commune intimately one with another, and shall be so closely associated in their lives, their aspirations, their aims and strivings as to be even as one soul. They are indeed the ones who are well-informed, keen-sighted, and who are endued with understanding. Bahá'u'lláh

These words of the Blessed Beauty came to me as the greatest balm in my direst moment. My beloved father, while on a visit to the United States for treatment, expired peacefully on 8 May 1982 in Oakbrook, Illinois, after unsuccessful

major surgery for internal abdominal haemorrhage. Beside him were my mother, Mrs. Shirin Joshi, sisters, Dr. Par-

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Picture in Upper Left Corner with the Caption: Asanand Chagla Joshi

veen and Dilafroz, and brother-in-law, Dr. Azam. I was in Karachi. Sorrowing friends attended his graveside in the Arlington Cemetery in Elmhurst and a befitting memorial meeting was held on 30 May in Skokie during which the Hand of the Cause Dhikru'lláh Khádem described him as a 'dedicated Bahá'í who truly served the Cause'. A memorial gathering was also held in Karachi on 10 September.

My father was born on 10 June 1910 into a priestly Hindu family; Sanskrit and Hindu scriptures came to him with his mother's milk. He graduated in law in 1914 [sic] and started a successful legal practice. He learned eleven languages, mastering nine, and was awarded a gold medal for Sanskrit by Bombay University. In 1945 he was accepted into the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh. Mr. Dipchand Khianra, whose appointment to the Continental Board of Counsellors in Western Asia was announced on 8 June 1973, was greatly responsible for enabling him to recognize the truth of the Bahá'í Faith.

Soon after embracing the Faith he was elected a member of the Local Spiritual Assembly of Karachi. In 1947, when Pakistan was born, he served as chairman of the Local Assembly. In 1948 he was elected to the National Spiritual Assembly of India, Pakistan and Burma, and in 1958, when the National Spiritual Assembly of Pakistan came into being, he served as its chairman. Thus his administrative service extended over a period of approximately twenty-five years.

Counsellor Dipchand Khianra writes: 'Esteemed Bakhtiari had built a house to establish a children's school like the Panchgani School in India. The building was requisitioned by a senior government executive who would not vacate. Mr. Joshi fought in the law courts for years and won the case. The building today houses the famed "New Day Montessori School". A silver-tongued orator, he organized many symposia in the Bahá'í Hall, Karachi, in which prominent citizens and scholars of Pakistan participated; addressed hundreds of gatherings; went in deputation to General Ayub Khán, the President of Pakistan, who, impressed by his sincerity, thereafter regarded him as a friend. As a member of the Auxiliary Board, appointed in 1974, he played a most vital part in teaching the Faith to Hindus in the interior of Pakistan and undertaking many teaching tours. It is pertinent to state that these Bahá'ís comprise seventy-five per cent of the members of the Bahá'í community of Pakistan.'

Another unforgettable service was his ceaseless effort to win recognition for the Faith as a separate minority religious community. In September 1972 the government of Pakistan accorded this recognition, the first ever achieved in an Islamic country. In his report to the National Spiritual Assembly he wrote, 'A victory has been won, a goal of the Nine Year Plan achieved. History was made

when the Islamic Republic of Pakistan issued a letter from the Law Minister to the National Spiritual Assembly assuring that all the minority religious communities, including the Bahá'ís, are free to profess their Faith, and the State [government of Pakistan] will in the discharge of its responsibilities give no cause of complaint to any community or religious minority. It is stated that under the Interim Constitution freedom of expression [free speech] is guaranteed.' He also secured tax exemption for the Bahá'í properties and led the Bahá'í delegation to the first Minorities Committees' Conference held at Quetta,

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Pakistan. The Minister for Religious Minorities presided over the meeting and expressed the fervent hope that the Bahá'ís would contribute to the welfare and prosperity of the country. For the first time Bahá'í speeches and prayers were televised throughout Pakistan.

A renowned lawyer, he served as honorary legal adviser to the Bahá'í administrative bodies for thirty years. As a member of the District Minority Committee he represented the Bahá'í community to the government for many years and was, on countless occasions, the Bahá'í representative to the United Nations. In all activities in the administrative field he served wholeheartedly and always readily offered his assistance in resolving crucial problems. He was given the status of an intellectual by nearly every President of Pakistan. Ever ready to serve the Cause, he advised us to be firm Bahá'ís, saying, 'Children, you must ally yourself with the spiritual army of Bahá'u'lláh. Faith is not a half-way house.'

A few days before he died he said that he wanted his grave to teach the Cause. Inscribed on his tombstone is a stanza from Bahá'u'lláh's Hidden Words. May the Blessed Beauty elevate in the Abhá Kingdom the station of one who so meritoriously and untiringly devoted his life to the firm establishment of the Cause of God in Pakistan.

The Universal House of Justice on 10 May 1982 cabled:

SADDENED LEARN PASSING ASANAND JOSHI STAUNCH SUPPORTER PROMOTER BELOVED FAITHFUL MEMBER AUXILIARY BOARD WILL BE REMEMBERED AS INTEGRAL PART DEVELOPMENT CAUSE THAT COUNTRY. ASSURE HIS FAMILY FRIENDS LOVING PRAYERS HOLY SHRINES PROGRESS HIS SOUL.

RÚHU'LLÁHCHAGLAJOSHI

JALÁL NAKHJAVÁNÍ

1917-1982

DEEPLY GRIEVED PASSING DEVOTED SERVANT BLESSED BEAUTY JALAL NAKHJAVANI. RECALLED WITH DEEP AFFECTION HIS DEDICATED SERVICES IN AFRICA VANGUARD FIRST PIONEERS TO SETTLE THAT CONTINENT LATER IN GERMANY AND MORE RECENTLY IN CANADA PARTICULARLY FRENCH SPEAKING AREAS. ASSURE BELOVED MEMBERS HIS FAMILY LOVING SYMPATHY

Few walk among men and invoke a spirit of love and admiration, respect and reverence that continues to inspire long after they have departed for the Abhá Kingdom, those with whom they came in contact during their earthly life. One such man was Jalál Nakhjavání, a truly great Bahá'í teacher, firmly rooted in his beloved Faith, deeply conversant with human history and international affairs, a scholar who was superbly capable of speaking fluently several languages of the East and the West.

He was born on 17 September 1917 in Baku, Southern Russia, to Fátimih Khanúm Tabrízí and 'Alí-Akbar Nakhjavání, who were married at the suggestion of the beloved Master. His father was one of the key believers in Baku and had regular correspon-

Picture in Lower Right Corner of the Page with the Caption: Jalál Nakhjavání
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dence with the Master from Whom he received numerous Tablets and instructions. Mírzá 'Alí-Akbar Nakhjavání later accompanied 'Abdu'l-Bahá on His travels in the West. Jalál's mother, Fátimih Khanúm, was the eldest daughter of two eminent believers whose mention is made in 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Memorials of the Faithful, as she came from a line of believers who accompanied Bahá'u'lláh on His exile to the Holy Land. She and her sister, Zeenat Khanúm Baghdádí, spent many years as attendants in the Master's household in 'Akká.

After the tragic passing of 'Alí-Akbar Nakhjavání, and owing to the political upheaval in Russia, Fátimih Khanúm was advised by 'Abdu'l-Bahá to travel to the Holy Land and reside there with her two small sons, Jalál aged four and 'Alí aged two. En route to the Holy Land the shattering news came of the passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Fátimih Khanúm immediately stopped their journey and awaited the decision of Shoghi Effendi, an example of her implicit servitude and obedience to the Faith and its administrative order which she imparted and instilled so lovingly in her children. Shoghi Effendi urged her to continue on her way to the Holy Land and thus it was that Jalál and his brother had the honour and privilege of growing up under the shadow of the Holy Shrines, and in Haifa, so blessed by the presence of the beloved Guardian and of the Greatest Holy Leaf.

From his youngest years Jalál was reared in the spirit of service exemplified by his mother and he acquired that devotion to Shoghi Effendi which was to characterize his acts of 'instant, exact and complete obedience' throughout his life. He attended the Ecole des Frères of the Jesuits in Haifa until he was of age to enter the American University in Beirut where he graduated in English Literature. He was fluent in both French and Arabic.

In 1937, at the injunction of Shoghi Effendi, Jalál and his mother returned to Írán; a year later his mother passed away in Tihrán. Jalál served his two years of compulsory military service and then entered the banking profession.

In 1943 he married Darakhshandih Na'imí, the only daughter of Mahhúbih and Darí-i-Mu'ayyad (Musin) Na'imí, and six months later the young couple enthusiastically embarked on homefront pioneering to the towns of Burújird and later Kirmansháh where they stayed until the early 1950s when the call came from Shoghi Effendi for Persian pioneers to arise and open new territories for the Faith in Africa. This exhortation of the beloved Guardian's to take the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh to Africa, the dark continent which was soon to become the continent of light, evoked an immediate response from Jalál. He relinquished an important promotion as head of the Foreign Exchange Department of Bank Melli of Írán and set out immediately for East Africa. In October 1950 Jalál set foot on the soil of East Africa as the first Bahá'í pioneer and by December of that year he had settled in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanganyika (now Tanzania), with his characteristic exuberance and optimism, ready to overcome every obstacle in the advancement of his beloved Faith. He was joined in June 1951 by his wife, his daughters Mona and Hoda, and his brother-in-law, Farhang Na'imí. His third child, a son, Ramin, was born in Dar-es-Salaam in 1956.

This was a difficult time, a period of two years when Jalál had no work and when he had to use all his savings to maintain his family. The heat of East Africa was intense. But it was during these years that his teaching efforts were crowned with exhilarating results. Their home was a focal point for the African friends to gather, hear and accept the soul-stirring message of Bahá'u'lláh. Jalál was instrumental in assisting a number of pioneers to settle in Africa at the beginning of the Ten Year Crusade launched by the beloved Guardian. Despite hardships and difficulties, Jalál persisted, and with his natural adaptiveness and joyous vitality, lent his share of energy to the firm establishment of the Cause in East Africa. He served on the first Local Spiritual Assembly of Dar-es-Salaam (1952) and was elected to the first National Spiritual Assembly of Central and East Africa (1954). He performed whatever duties he was given with zeal and enthusiasm. In 1954 the Hand of the Cause of God Músá Banání appointed him one of his nine Auxiliary Board members. It was at this time that Jalál made extensive teaching trips visiting the islands of Zanzibar, Madagascar, Mauritius, Reunion and the Comoro Islands. His dynamic and vibrant

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personality, his total and unquestioned devotion and his deep knowledge of the Bahá'í Writings, especially in the fields of Bahá'í history and administration, influenced and galvanized the believers.

When Shoghi Effendi announced the need for pioneers to open the virgin territories of the Belgian Congo (now Zaire), Jalál immediately arose, arranged his travel documents and started out. When he reached Nairobi, Kenya, he received a cable from the Guardian telling him to return and maintain his post in Dar-es-Salaam, an instruction with which he immediately complied. These were glorious years of expansion and consolidation, years that made history and brought triumphs in the teaching field in Africa which gladdened the heart of the beloved Guardian.

The passing of Shoghi Effendi in November 1957 was a terrible and shattering blow to the entire Bahá'í world, but it was a personal loss for Jalál to whom the Guardian had been an inspiration all his life. He renewed his teaching trips with greater diligence and was instrumental, at the specific request of the Hands of the Cause, in confirming and deepening in the Covenant, the believers on the islands of the Indian Ocean. Throughout Jalál's remaining years in Africa he continued to be an outstanding example of radiant steadfastness, of contented servitude, spreading joy, humour and delight wherever he went and showering love and happiness on all whom he met. To his last days he performed every service for the love of Shoghi Effendi and it was with the same dedication that he maintained his services to the Universal House of Justice.

In 1967, after having spent almost seventeen years in Africa, he moved with his family to West Germany, ready to face a new challenge with undiminished zeal. Here he continued to render inestimable services to anyone who required help in settling in Europe, performing every task with courtesy and loving kindness, care and understanding. Of him it can be truly said that he raised the down-trodden, comforted the hopeless, assisted the weary unfamiliar traveller and quenched the hunger and thirst, whether material or spiritual, of those who search among the multitudinous confusing theories of men. He was a valued member of the Local Spiritual Assembly of Hamburg/Eimsbuttel and was a delegate to the National Convention a number of times, contributing his irrepressible enthusiasm to the consultation each Ridván. He and his wife pioneered to Neumuenster, West Germany, and assisted in the initial stages of the establishment of the first Local Spiritual Assembly there. For eleven years, in spite of language impediment, he gave of both time and energy to the work of the Faith until 1978 when he and his wife decided to move to Canada where their daughter, Mona, had already settled.

It was in Canada, during the last four years of his earthly life which he had lived so fully and richly in the service of his beloved Faith, that he gave of every last ounce of his unique capacities. As a member of the Local Spiritual Assembly of Selkirk, Manitoba, he was both distinguished and accessible to all who needed his encouragement and love. As a member of the National Pioneering Committee of Canada he contributed from the wealth of his experience and inspired future pioneers with his optimism. As a travelling teacher throughout the province of Quebec and the Maritimes, he was a source of vitality and joy, enthusing the believers with his spontaneous nature, delighting them with his sense of humour, inspiring them with his depth of knowledge and unrestrained flow of stories on every facet of life and with the example of his zeal. His travels in Canada and particularly in Quebec were of great benefit, for he was able to communicate with fluency and depth of feeling in French, a language he dearly loved. French-speaking Canadians remember him with great love and respect. A believer who visited the Maritime area shortly after his death wrote, 'Everyone misses Jalál. It is beyond the capacity of my words to tell you just how much and in what ways and to how profound a degree this extraordinary, ebullient, magnanimous spirit touched the hearts and revived

the life of the souls of the people here. He was a catalyst, a mover. He exuded wellbeing and delight in life that tantalized the seeker and confirmed the believer in the Cause. Remembrance of him never fails to bring the glow of sunlight to people's faces.'

In October 1981, immediately after an extensive teaching trip to Quebec, the Maritimes and the French islands of the Atlantic

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Ocean — a trip during which he appeared on television and radio and became the instrument through which a number of people accepted the Faith — Jalál became suddenly ill. Despite surgery in January 1982 his health declined rapidly and he passed away peacefully on 9 May. The year of his passing was that of the fiftieth anniversary of the passing of the Greatest Holy Leaf and the twenty-fifth anniversary of the passing of the beloved Guardian, the two shining figures who had inspired his love, devotion and service to the Faith since his earliest years. Jalál's blessed remains were laid to rest in St. Clements Cemetery in Selkirk, Manitoba; this, too, was a service to the Faith as it enabled the purchase of a Bahá'í burial plot. The Hand of the Cause of God John Robarts, a dear friend of long standing since the days of pioneering in Africa, attended the funeral along with an enormous assemblage of people from all strata of society and of many racial and religious backgrounds upon whom Jalál Nakhjavání had left a deep and lasting impression by virtue of his radiant nature. A special delegation of members of the United Nations Association on whose executive committee Jalál had served actively in Winnipeg also attended the funeral to pay their respects to a truly unforgettable man. His family was inundated with telegrams and letters from all across the world recounting his innumerable services, recording the impact of his dynamic personality and remarking upon the laughter and joy he had showered upon all whom he met and the memory of which would remain with them for ever. He left behind a testimony that valiant heroism and service to the true interests of humanity are alive and thriving, and that exemplary and effective action will continue to inspire those remaining in this transient world.

The truly great are those, such as Jalál Nakhjavání, whose very memory, long after their passing on to a nobler habitation, befitting their station, will continue to stir in people the desire to do the Will of the Creator. Those who reflect on the actions of Jalál Nakhjavání perpetuate the remembrance of one who was a true servant of God and a lover of mankind. MONA BOSSI (NAKHJAVÁNÍ)

EUGEN SCHMIDT

1901-1982

Picture in Upper Right Corner with the Caption: Eugen Schmidt

We take leave of Dr. Eugen Schmidt. A fulfilled life has come to an end. A great, pure soul has ascended to its eternal home.

Eugen Schmidt was born in Stuttgart on 22 February 1901. He grew up in an austere Christian home where basic religious values and ethics were imprinted

deeply upon his mind. 'God grants success to the sincere,' was his guiding motto. In his early youth his alert intellect had discovered the many terrible conflicts of life, and especially those afflicting human society; experiencing the First World War as a youth made him an ardent seeker. Deep in his heart he felt that the solution to humanity's problems lay not in brute force but in intellectual enlightenment, philosophical endeavour, unbiased and world-embracing religious consciousness and an improved social order. After the war he gathered about him a circle of like-minded friends who, without regard to political affiliations, worked enthusiastically and with great conviction for the cause of world peace, setting before their

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listeners at youth congresses, and at functions they themselves organized, the high aspirations they held for an enlightened society in which all would work together in harmony. Already, then, we glimpse Eugen Schmidt as he will live on in our memory: a man of passionate convictions and thoroughly thought-out views which he was able to present with great eloquence.

About 1924 he encountered the Bahá'í Faith. He must have been a very critical and challenging God-seeker at first, but the longer and more actively he explored the all-encompassing, clear concepts of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the more deeply convinced he became of their validity. The vision of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh captivated him and became the motivating force of his life.

Because of his father's unemployment, Eugen Schmidt began studying rather late. In 1932 he obtained a doctorate in political science. Professionally, he had for many years held a leading position in industry. After his military service and war captivity he was employed in the service of Public Health and Social Security, a field about which he had written in his doctoral thesis. As a writer, editor and organizer he was constantly expending his energies on behalf of a 'healthy nation'.

On one of the first occasions when he presented a Bahá'í paper at a youth conference he met Erna Kauffmann whom he later married. Two sons and one daughter were born of this happy marriage.

Eugen Schmidt was one of the most active, conscientious and enterprising German Bahá'ís. If, in the thirties and fifties — before and after the prohibition imposed by the Nazi regime — there were three believers who decisively influenced the German Bahá'ís and led them as they took their very first steps towards fulfilling that great vision which Bahá'u'lláh, 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi had of the spiritual reality of the German people, they were the three doctors: Hermann Grossmann, the visionary of the new Covenant of God and the divine World Order; Adelbert Mühlischlegel, the poet and mystic; and Eugen Schmidt, the pragmatic organizer, who was capable of advancing the German Bahá'í community, step by step, closer to the practical realization of its spiritual goals. He was a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Germany from 1932 onwards, and its chairman in the decisive years of re-building after

World War II. He was also a member of the Spiritual Assemblies of his home communities of Stuttgart and then Leinfelden-Echterdingen; editor of Bahá'í Nachrichten, the newsletter of Germany, and of Sonne der Wahrheit, a Bahá'í periodical; an ever-available public speaker and lecturer; an enthusiastic organizer of and participant in large international conferences, World Religion Day observances and other gatherings; and the author and translator of articles. It is my hope that the Bahá'í Publishing Trust of Germany will soon have the privilege of producing a memorial volume of his selected essays. For myself, and surely also for my friend, Dieter Schubert, the editorial consultations with Eugen Schmidt about the first issues of Bahá'í Briefe were among the most fruitful inspirations of our younger years. As a postscript to a letter written to Eugen Schmidt on his behalf on 9 April 1955, Shoghi Effendi inscribed these words, 'May the Almighty bless your meritorious endeavours, guide every step you take, and aid you to enrich the record of your deeply appreciated services to His Faith.'

Without the intensive, personal, sacrificial service of Eugen Schmidt we would not have witnessed the dedication of the national Hazíratu'l-Quds (1952) nor that of the first European House of Worship (1964). He served the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh for many years as a member of the Auxiliary Board and, until his strength waned in old age, he worked for the Bahá'í Public Relations Committee and the liaison committee of the Bahá'í International Community at the United Nations. In all these sacrificial and time-consuming undertakings extending over more than half a century, Dr. Schmidt had the close companionship of his trusted co-worker and dependable comrade, Erna. Few families have more fully exemplified the spirit of the new age in their every-day living. The Schmidt home was an inviolable centre of harmony, the embodiment of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Words, a house of peace, a house of happiness and exultation.

The German Bahá'í community is deeply indebted to Eugen Schmidt. Only later genera-

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tions will be in a position to fully appreciate how wide and secure were the foundations which he and other Bahá'ís of his generation laid in difficult times. The Universal House of Justice wrote, in its cable of condolence to the National Spiritual Assembly of Germany, on 2 June 1982:

CONVEY MEMBERS HIS FAMILY LOVING SYMPATHY PASSING OUTSTANDING STALWART DEVO BELIEVER EUGEN SCHMIDT. HIS LONG SERVICES ADMINISTRATIVE TEACHING FIELDS WILL ALWAYS BE REMEMBERED. ASSURE PRAYERS HOLY SHRINES PROGRESS HIS SOUL ABUNDANT REWARD ABHA KINGDOM. (Adapted from a memoir by PETER MÜHLSCHLEGEL)

RICHARD ST. BARBE BAKER, O.B.E.
1889-1982

PASSING DISTINGUISHED DEDICATED SERVANT HUMANITY RICHARD ST BARBE BAKER LOSS T ENTIRE WORLD AND TO BAHAI COMMUNITY AN OUTSTANDING SERVANT SPOKESMAN FAITH.

DEVOTION BELOVED GUARDIAN NEVER CEASING EFFORTS BEST INTERESTS MANKIND
MERITORIOUS EXAMPLE. ASSURE FAMILY FRIENDS PRAYERS SACRED THRESHOLD BOUNTIFOL
REWARD PROGRESS SOUL ABHA KINGDOM. Universal House of Justice, 10 June 1982

Picture in Upper Right Corner with the Caption: Richard St. Barbe Baker

Ecology is not a new branch of science, but rather one newly appreciated by recent generations. This interest in the pattern of relations between organisms and their environment is no longer the preserve of academics; the general public's concern in this field has assumed an increasingly important profile. As with so many other areas of human endeavour, the questioning of inherited traditional values in the mid-1800s encompassed our relationship to the natural environment. One of the most important figures in articulating these questions and engaging the public in a search for new directions was an Englishman who became widely known as 'the Man of the Trees'.

Richard St. Barbe Baker, usually addressed as St. Barbe, was born on 9 October 1889 at West End, near Southampton, in England. His long life as a forester, author and conservationist brought to many generations the message of the importance of the natural environment and, in particular, trees. His unique synthesis of the practical knowledge of a trained forester and an almost mystical vision of the role that forests play in the life of man served to inspire millions of people the world over to become involved in restoring what he referred to as '... earth's green mantle, the Trees'. He was the first Bahá'í to achieve international recognition for his forestry and environmental work, and so it is appropriate to examine not only the contribution he made to his profession, but also to the influence of the Bahá'í Faith on his development.

As a young man, St. Barbe went to homestead in Canada in response to a call for Christian men to attend to the spiritual needs of settlers on the prairies. He bought land in the newly-created province of Saskatchewan,

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and devoted himself to building up congregations in rural areas. Then, in 1909, he enrolled in the first class of the University of Saskatchewan, in Saskatoon.

It was while living in the Canadian west that he first saw the effects of the sudden disruption of an entire ecosystem. The ploughing up of immense areas of prairie grasslands to create farms, with only sporadic compensation measures such as planting tree shelterbelts, resulted in much valuable topsoil being blown away. Similarly, when he began working at a lumber camp in northern Saskatchewan, he witnessed the unnecessary waste of trees as virgin forests were logged. He left for England in 1912, determined that one day he would be involved in forestry and conservation work. However, the Christian ministry was still his first calling, and he enrolled in Divinity at Ridley Hall, Cambridge. This pursuit was soon interrupted by the outbreak of World War I, in response to which he enlisted and served in France. Following the war St. Barbe returned to Cambridge and this time took a diploma in Forestry at Caius College.

Thus qualified, he went to Kenya in 1920 to serve under the Colonial Office as Assistant Conservator of Forests. In Africa he again saw evidence of the tendency to take too much from the land and to exploit excessively the forests. In the highlands of Kenya large tracts of land had been devastated by a combination of the introduction of goats, the clear-felling of forests and the arrival of white settlers. St. Barbe conceived a plan to restore the indigenous forests using a system under which food crops were planted between rows of young native trees. Several years of crops would be harvested before the trees grew to a size that necessitated moving to a new site, leaving behind a potential forest and demonstrating that supplying people's basic needs is not incompatible with managing forests. Thousands of tree seedlings were needed for the operation, and departmental funds that St. Barbe had at his disposal were negligible.

In 1922 he took a step, unprecedented at the time, to remedy this lack of funds. He consulted with the Africans themselves, approaching the Kikuyu Chiefs and Elders in the area and enquiring how their tribesmen could be enlisted to help with tree planting. He worked with them to develop a scheme for the voluntary planting of trees. This resulted in three thousand warriors coming to his camp from among whom, with the assistance of the Chiefs, he selected fifty to be the first Wau wa Miti, or Men of the Trees. They promised before N'gai, the High God, that they would protect the native forest, plant ten native trees each year, and take care of trees everywhere. The society of The Men of the Trees later spread to many other countries and its membership today includes men and women from all walks of life. His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales became the Patron of the organization in 1979.

In the last decade foresters have begun to realize that the answer to deforestation lies in persuading the local people that safeguarding their forests will protect their livelihoods, while planting new forests will actually enhance their standards of living. This approach of enlisting local people is now called 'social' forestry. St. Barbe began implementing this idea half a century before it became accepted practice, and was the object of much criticism during his early days for becoming too involved with the indigenous people of Kenya and elsewhere. He lived long enough to see the climate of opinion change and to witness recognition of his pioneering work in helping to pave the way for the adoption of a new philosophy in forestry.

After leaving Kenya in 1924, St. Barbe went back to England where he read a paper on African Bantu beliefs at the First Congress of Living Religions within the Commonwealth. At the conclusion of his talk he was approached by Claudia Stewart Coles who introduced him to the Bahá'í Faith by explaining that his genuine interest in another's religion struck a sympathetic chord with the Bahá'í principles. Under her guidance St. Barbe studied the Faith and embraced it shortly after.

Although he was later appointed Assistant Conservator of Forests for the southern provinces in Nigeria and served in this post from 1924 to 1929, there was one event during St. Barbe's tenure in Kenya that prevented his ever rising

higher within the ranks of the Colonial Office: a superior officer attempted to strike a Kikuyu worker with the butt end of a rifle and St. Barbe stepped in to intercept. He felt that it was an unfair action and took

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the blow on his own shoulder. Considered an outrageous act of insubordination at the time, the episode is still remembered by Africans. It helped St. Barbe in enlisting their support for his many tree-planting programmes. He was later to reflect that: 'My discharge from the Colonial Service liberated me for much greater work in reforestation and earth regeneration in other parts of the world.'

The first indication of the new direction of his career came in 1929 when the High Commissioner of Palestine, Sir John Chancellor, asked St. Barbe to apply the lessons garnered during his time in Kenya to help unify disparate religionists in the British protectorate. In a move that indicated his appreciation of the role of the Bahá'í Faith, St. Barbe's first action was to approach its Guardian, Shoghi Effendi, who became the first life member of the Men of the Trees in Palestine. Working closely with the High Commissioner, St. Barbe then went on to enlist the Chancellor of the Hebrew University, the Grand Mufti of the Supreme Muslim Council, the Latin Patriarch, the Bishop of Jerusalem and others, explaining that : ' ... there was no land needing trees more than Palestine and no land would respond so well to planting.' From this initiative, forty-two nurseries were established. However, St. Barbe realized that providing the seedlings was not enough, and so he set out to establish tree planting as part of the culture, as he had done so successfully in Kenya. To this end he was instrumental in making Tu Bi'Shvat (the traditional Feast of Trees) a national tree-planting day which is now taken up by most Israeli schoolchildren. In his project in Palestine St. Barbe had the active support of notables including Field Marshal Viscount Allenby and Sir Francis Younghusband. His ability to enlist the help of prominent figures was now combined with his appreciation of the practical side of forestry and an understanding of how to involve local people in his plans. Thus was set a pattern of action which was to result in the involvement of millions of men and women around the world in the planting of billions of trees.

For many, St. Barbe will be remembered for two of his undertakings which more than any others seemed to capture the public's imagination: his work to save large tracts of California coastal redwood trees, and his plans to reclaim millions of acres of the Sahara desert.

By the early 1930s the redwoods of California were under threat from lumber operations. Although there was talk of saving small groves of these trees, St. Barbe felt it was necessary to set aside an area large enough to sustain the natural climate needed for the micro-forest. He raised interest in his plans by lecturing extensively across the United States and Britain. With a modest financial contribution towards the 'save the redwoods' project from The Men of the Trees in the United Kingdom, St. Barbe was able to attract the attention of

the American public who in turn responded with contributions amounting to over ten million dollars. The result was that a natural reserve of twelve thousand acres of redwoods were handed over to the State of California to be preserved for all time.

In 1952, with the blessing of several major universities, St. Barbe led the first Sahara University Expedition. His book *Sahara Challenge* describes the 9,000-mile journey and outlines his conviction that the phenomenal pace with which the Sahara over the centuries was merging into the Libyan desert could be arrested, further encroachment prevented and reclamation undertaken if the correct action was taken. As in other areas, St. Barbe was ahead of the times in his vision of trees forming a 'Green Front' against the Sahara and other deserts. Only recently have governments and international agencies such as the United Nations begun to properly address the issue of the spreading of deserts. And yet St. Barbe was aware of the root cause of this delay. He wrote: 'The conquest of the desert will have to start with the conquest of the heart of man. We have witnessed tremendous strides in scientific research and inventions, but it is obvious that the spiritual advance of mankind has not kept pace with scientific progress.' He presented the challenge of reclaiming the Sahara as '... A One World Purpose' that 'would unite East and West and be the scientific and physical answer to the world's dilemma.'

For many years following his acceptance of the Bahá'í Faith, people would often know St. Barbe for some time before learning that he

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was a Bahá'í, for he was also an Edwardian — a composite of convention, eccentricity and very strong principles — who found it difficult to discuss religion, let alone ascribe himself publicly to this 'unconventional' Faith. However, as his friend of many years, David Hofman, said of St. Barbe's very first encounter with Bahá'í: 'He always said that this was the beginning of his true life, and he realized that he derived so much benefit from these [Bahá'í] prayers that it was only fair that he should serve the Bahá'í Faith to the best of his ability.' Mr. Hofman also noted that: '... he spread knowledge of the Faith wherever he went and was greatly admired by Shoghi Effendi for his dedication to the cause of humanity.' He served the Faith throughout his life in his work as a forester and author. He wrote: 'The simple act of planting a tree, which is in itself a practical deed, is also the symbol of a far-reaching ideal, which is creative in the realm of the spirit, and in turn reacts upon society, encouraging all to work for the future well-being of humanity rather than for immediate gain.'

A letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to St. Barbe on 31 May 1953 bears a postscript in the Guardian's own hand: 'May the Almighty abundantly reward you for your splendid and manifold activities in the service of the Faith, and enable you to enrich continually the record of your greatly valued and meritorious accomplishments, Your true and grateful brother ... '

St. Barbe died on 9 June 1982 in Saskatoon. Although he was in his

ninety-second year, he was still full of plans and was working on his thirty-first book. Just days before his death he planted his last tree on the grounds of the University of Saskatchewan. He had gone full circle to return to the place which had helped kindle a vision that, fuelled by the Bahá'í Faith, aided the creation of a new understanding in the consciousness of men of the importance of trees. HUGH C. LOCKE

HENRY BRECHTEFELD

1929-1982

Picture in Upper Right Corner with the Caption: Henry Brechtefeld

Henry Brechtefeld passed on to the Abhá Kingdom on 13 September 1982 in his fifty-third year. He was born on the island of Marakei in the Kiribati (formerly Gilbert) Islands. He came from a strict Catholic family and received his education at a church school. He left the Gilbert Islands as a youth and went to New Hebrides (now Vanuatu) to live with an uncle. Later he settled in the Solomon Islands where he first worked with the government, then for Mr. and Mrs. Alvin J. Blum, and then went into business on his own. He opened a second-hand clothing store. This was a great boon to the island people who could not afford new clothes. Later this industry was taken up by the Solomon Islanders and the Chinese and has spread throughout the Solomons.

The Blums were the first to tell Henry of the Bahá'í Faith and later he came into contact with the musician, Russ Garcia, and his wife, Gina, who were in the Solomons for a short time. He became very attracted through their songs and the meetings he had with them. They gave him books to read and he became deeply touched by the Bahá'í teachings. A truly amazing change came into his life and he became completely dedicated to the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh. It was this change in Henry that

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created a deep impression. Formerly he drank heavily and was an inveterate gambler. He immediately gave up drinking and when he became aware about the admonition about gambling he told his friends not to come to his house for this purpose. His family and friends, many of whom were of Gilbertese background, were at first antagonistic because he was teaching a new Faith. However, Henry displayed patience and persistence. He started classes and firesides in a room he built at the back of his store which was located in the village of White River, about three miles from the township of Honiara. Gradually he won to the Faith most of his family. His saintly old mother, who could not speak English, would sit quietly day after day, listening and observing and lost in thought, when suddenly the veil was rent and she became a radiant Bahá'í.

Henry was elected to the National Spiritual Assembly and served until he was named an Auxiliary Board member. He travelled to different islands of the Solomons — Savo, St. Christobal, Western Solomons, Tulagi and Guadalcanal. He brought into the Faith a very outstanding personality of great capacity, one well versed in the Bible and a sound teacher of the Cause today, who, too, has

travelled extensively teaching the Faith; he is now chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly and with several other members of the National Assembly attended the International Convention in Haifa.

Henry developed diabetes in the last year of his life and experienced great tests — marital, financial and health. However, his very strong faith in meeting these problems was an example to all of us. He had a longing to go back to his native Kiribati and to the Marshalls where he had spent some time in his early days. His condition was aggravated by a coral cut he received and he returned to the Solomons very ill. He might have been spared if he had consented to have his leg and arm amputated. This he refused to do, as he was already longing for that other world which had now become very near to him.

The last days of his life were very poignant and sweet. The many youth he taught in White River came as in vigil and sang the songs he loved in the Gilbertese language and songs of the Faith. With great love he counselled them to dedicate their lives to the teaching of the Faith and exhorted them to become examples worthy of this great Cause. This they have done and are doing. They have become a very united group, teaching and singing their way to the hearts of the people.

It is said that there are as many ways to God as there are breaths. How can one gauge the hunger of a soul for its Creator, when one who was a drunkard and gambler can change in the twinkling of an eye through the Words of the Blessed Beauty and render 'instant, exact and complete obedience' to His Cause?

Many people of all denominations came to the funeral of Henry Brechtefeld and were visibly touched by the funeral service and the spirit of the Faith. His remains are buried in the Bahá'í cemetery close to the Hazíratu'l-Quds of the Solomon Islands.

LOT MAX SEEPÉ
1908-1982

DEEPLY GRIEVED PASSING BELOVED PROMOTER FAITH MAX SEEPE. HIS LONG RECORD DEVOTED SERVICES HIS EXEMPLARY STEADFASTNESS WILL ALWAYS INSPIRE HEARTS HIS COWORKERS AND COUNTRYMEN. PRAYING HOLY SHRINES PROGRESS HS NOBLE SOUL. EXTEN FAMILY LOVING SYMPATHY. Universal House of Justice, 6 October 1982

Max Seepé was the first 'Coloured' believer to embrace the Faith in South Africa. His declaration was made in July 1955 when he was forty-five years of age. He was a teacher by profession and had taught in many cities in South Africa, but at this time he was working for an insurance company, a job which he held until the end of his life. He lived in Western Township, Johannesburg. He had distinguished himself through his services as a Scout and he was active in the St. John Ambulance Association as a first-aid assistant.

Western Township was one of several 'Coloured' townships in Johannesburg. The Seepé home soon became the focal point of Bahá'í teaching work. In his enthusiastic teaching Max was assisted by his wife, May, who enrolled in the Faith later that year and became the first 'Coloured' woman believer in South

Africa. For many years Max

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Picture in Upper Left Corner with the Caption: Lot Max Seepé

served as chairman of the Local Spiritual Assembly for Western, Newclare and Sophiatown Townships. Eventually this Assembly was integrated into the Johannesburg Assembly as restrictions in the country relaxed. Max continued to serve on this Assembly until his passing.

In the firesides at the Seepé home, Max and May were assisted by Florence Marumo, Peter Thebenare, Andrew Mofokeng, and William Mesehla. In those early days there were also deepening classes conducted by William Sears and his wife, Marguerite, at their farm. Max made certain that the Western Township Bahá'í community was regular in attending such classes; he could, indeed, be considered the father of the 'Coloured' believers in Johannesburg.

In April 1956 Max was elected to the first National Spiritual Assembly of South and West Africa and served on this institution for twenty-five years. At the time of his passing on 3 October 1982, he was the only original member remaining on the Assembly.

During his period of service Max showed several virtues. He was frank and forthright in consultation, was not given to unnecessary speech, took decisions with ease and an almost youth-like enthusiasm and firmly upheld the application of Bahá'í principles. His phenomenal memory for the various evolutionary steps involved in the development of the Faith in the region served the Assembly well as new members were added. He believed strongly in fellowship and was always enthusiastic about attending a Convention or conference, distance and expense being no object. He found ways of economizing in order to travel and teach. Max unfailingly displayed obedience to his Assembly and humility to his fellow believers. Nothing was more paramount than attending the meetings of the National Spiritual Assembly; punctuality delighted him and it was rare that Max was absent or late. His well-worn prayer book, flexible from handling, was always in his breast pocket ready for use. He gave a helping hand to a number of countries in Southern Africa including Swaziland, Lesotho, Botswana, Malawi, Zambia, Zululand and Mozambique, where he travelled, often with May, on teaching trips or to attend conferences, Conventions and Summer Schools. He attended the first International Convention for the election of the Universal House of Justice, where he served as a teller, and went on to attend the World Congress in London. In 1978 he was again privileged to serve as a teller during the International Convention. He was the official representative of the National Assembly at many conferences over the years and always discharged his responsibilities with honour and dignity.

On 9 July 1957 the beloved Guardian wrote to the National Spiritual Assembly of South and West Africa: '... considering the diversity of problems this newly-elected Body has had to grapple with since its inception, the grave dangers with which it has been faced, the vastness of the area in which it has

been called upon to operate, and the diversity of the peoples and tribes which it has been its privilege to contact, enlighten and direct, its concrete and enduring achievements, in the course of the last twelve months, have been such as to evoke in my heart feelings of unqualified admiration for the manner in which it has discharged its varied and weighty responsibilities. It has indeed, through the wisdom it has displayed, the energy with

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which it has laboured, the fidelity which it has abundantly demonstrated, and the courage and single-mindedness with which its members have arisen to discharge their mission, set an example worthy of emulation by not only its three sister Assemblies in that continent, but by every other National or Regional Assembly in either the eastern or western hemisphere.' Max was an integral part of that National Spiritual Assembly. The cable sent by the Continental Board of Counsellors for Africa at the time of Max's passing summarizes his effect upon the continent:

DEEPLY GRIEVED SAD UNEXPECTED NEWS PASSING BELOVED MAX SEEPE WELL REMEMBERED THROUGHOUT CONTINENT AS ONE OF MOST ENTHUSIASTIC EARLY BELIEVERS SOUTHERN AFRICA. KINDLY CONVEY LOVING CONDOLENCES HIS FAMILY YOUR MEMBERS AND ALL FRIENDS. DEEPEST SYMPATHY COUNSELLORS.

Max Seepé's last meeting with the Bahá'ís was the International Conference held in Johannesburg on 19 September 1982, the conference dedicated to the Greatest Holy Leaf and held in the year that marked the fiftieth anniversary of her passing, and the twenty-fifth anniversary of the passing of the Guardian. Present at that gathering as the representative of the Universal House of Justice was Max's teacher, the Hand of the Cause of God William Sears.

Max's greatest wish was to once more attend the International Convention in Haifa during Ridván 1983. But it was not to be. However, his fellow National Assembly members who were present thought of him often during those precious days, especially when the tellers made their report, and said prayers on his behalf at the Holy Shrines.

Truly,

HIS EXEMPLARY STEADFASTNESS WILL ALWAYS INSPIRE [the] HEARTS [of] HIS COWORKERS AND COUNTRYMEN. What greater tribute could be paid a Bahá'í than to be called by the Universal House of Justice A NOBLE SOUL! ANDREW MOFOKENG

Picture in Upper Right Corner with the Caption: Lisbeth Greeves

LISBETH GREEVES

1897-1982

ASSURE LOVING PRAYERS SACRED THRESHOLD PROGRESS RADIANT SOUL LISBETH GREEVES. BAHAI COMMUNITIES GREAT BRITAIN IRELAND MAY COMPENSATE GRIEVOUS LOSS CONTRIBUTOR HER HAPPINESS ABHA KINGDOM BY EMULATING HER BRILLIANT EXAMPLE UNFAILING DEVOTION UNIVERSAL LOVE CONSTANT CHEERFULNESS. KINDLY EXPRESS LOVING SYMPATHY RELATIVES. Universal House of Justice

On 14 December 1982, following a long illness, Lisbeth Greeves passed to the Abhá Kingdom in her eighty-sixth year. Her many manifest spiritual qualities endeared her to hundreds of people during her long service as a Bahá'í. Although she was born in Australia in 1897, her entire Bahá'í life was lived in Northern Ireland, first at Crawfordsburn, near Bangor, and then as a member of the Belfast community.

From her early years she was a spiritual rebel. She recalled walking out of church in Australia, in a rage, saying, 'Jesus wouldn't

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like what that stupid man said!' Thus began her questioning and searching. Although she did not declare her acceptance of the Bahá'í Faith until 8 October 1954, she recollected having seen in the spring of 1918 a newspaper headline: a cabled message from General Allenby which read, HAVE TODAY TAKEN PALESTINE. NOTIFY THE WORLD THAT 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ IS SAFE.1

During World War II her disgust at the senseless violence resulted in her publishing, in co-operation with her husband, two little booklets of spiritual inspiration called *The Windows of Heaven* and *The Little Blue Flame*. For these she used the nom de plume Peter Jarvis. Providentially, she chose, in the front of one of them, to quote Emerson: 'Man's health and greatness consists in his being the channel through which Heaven flows to earth.' This became the hallmark of her future Bahá'í life. Having decided some time prior to becoming to a Bahá'í that the spiritual path was the one to follow, her qualities as a spiritual healer began to come to the fore. From then, until a few months before her death, she became a healing channel for the relief, and sometimes the seemingly miraculous cure, of many people from all walks of life. Her unshakeable reliance on prayer resulted in many stories of divine aid coming to the rescue. Some of these incidents were very humorous; indeed, humour was a quality which wove itself firmly into her spiritual fabric.

From the beginning of her devotion to Bahá'u'lláh, which was unfailing, her many qualities quickly developed and were placed at the service of mankind. She constantly thought of others: a little posy of flowers, a small note of love and prayerful thoughts, a timely telephone call to a sick one. In spite of her pouring out love to all, she never once neglected her husband and three children. In this respect her example was a beacon to all: how to both live a full Bahá'í life and pay constant, devoted attention to a wide family circle.

The universal love she displayed expressed itself in her desire to share the message of Christ's return with all in a manner which they might understand. To this end her talents as a writer came to her aid. She wrote and broadcast from time to time on several subjects. She has left us at least four short plays on historical figures of the Bahá'í Faith. In 1976 she recorded her memories in a short work called *The Choir Invisible*. In this she spoke of her early experiences in Australia, as well as the many extraordinary spiritual happenings which attended her life. Her deep love for children was constant, and her own child-like quality attracted young people of all ages. In 1976 she

recorded Stories for Children — stories about the Master.

Despite her very full life, her international relations with Bahá'ís from many countries is well recognized. She was overjoyed to be able to attend the dedication of the Temples in Kampala and Sydney. While the historic World Congress in London in 1963 left its loving mark on her soul, she was most inspired by her pilgrimage to the Holy Land also in that same year. On the local level she worked for many years for the United Nations Association and will be long remembered in this respect.

Her constant cheerfulness throughout all the years uplifted many a struggling soul just when they most needed it. Surely she made 'Heaven flow to earth'. Now, released from this material world, one feels she is soaring in those other climes with which she was often in contact. She is, no doubt, surrounded by that heavenly music she so vividly described hearing one special night a long time ago. KEITH MUNRO

DUDLEY MOORE BLAKELY

1902-1982

Knight of Bahá'u'lláh

Dudley M. Blakely was born in October 1902 and declared his belief in Bahá'u'lláh in 1920. He was ever afterwards a devoted servant of the Bahá'í Faith. Following in the footsteps of his illustrious aunt, Lua Getsinger, he spread the Message far and wide. His travels took him in the 1930s to the Sudan in Africa and Guyana (formerly British Guiana) in South America.² In the spring of 1936 he wrote to

1 Lady Blomfield, *The Chosen Highway*, p. 220.

2 See *The Bahá'í Centenary: 1844-1944*, p. 197.

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Picture in Upper Left Corner with the Caption: Dudley Moore Blakely

Shoghi Effendi seeking approval of his plan to teach in Latin America with his wife, Elsa. A reply dated 6 March written on behalf of the Guardian expressed Shoghi Effendi's gratification at the news of this 'projected teaching trip to South America', and remarked that 'the lands you are planning to visit are still virgin soils that no Bahá'í pioneer has as yet opened to the Faith. You are therefore called upon to undertake the work of a true pioneer.' In a postscript in his own handwriting the Guardian added, 'I am delighted to learn of your plans and of your determination to serve our beloved Cause in such distant countries and under such difficult circumstances. You are often in my thoughts and prayers. May the Almighty, Whose Cause you are serving with such love, fervour and devotion, bless richly your work and fulfill your highest and dearest hopes.' A letter dated 8 April 1936 written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi by his secretary records that 'the Guardian is truly delighted to learn of the success of your teaching trip to British Guiana'. There followed years of valuable contributions to the development of the teaching work in Latin

America. Between the years 1936 and 1956 the Blakelys were in frequent correspondence with the Guardian, reporting the progress of their teaching efforts and seeking approval of new ventures.

In the early phase of the Ten Year Crusade Dudley and Elsa (or 'Judy' as she is known to her many friends) pioneered to Tonga, earning the title Knights of Bahá'u'lláh. A report sent to the Holy Land in the spring of 1956 describing the participation of Tongan believers in the teaching work in the islands brought a reply written on the Guardian's behalf on 1 May, stating, 'The Polynesians for many centuries ... have been admired for their fine characteristics and the nobility of their spirit. It would be a great contribution to the world-wide character of our Faith to have people of this race active in its service and representing what their race has to give, as time goes on, in joint Bahá'í national and international councils. Your services there are very deeply appreciated, and the work you are accomplishing, very dear to his heart.'

They settled in Hawaii at the end of the Ten Year Plan, and in September 1977 pioneered to the Bahamas to help prepare the Bahamian Bahá'í community for the formation of its first National Spiritual Assembly, but circumstances beyond their control forced them to leave the following February. Dudley was then in his seventy-sixth year.

An artist, sculptor and designer by profession, he served as an adviser to the Tongan government. His handiwork can be seen in the several buildings and interiors he designed in the islands. Many such works can also be seen in the United States. He left a legacy of beauty. As a consultant, he produced designs for such diverse items as a small dory for the Department of Fisheries, a pilot boat, a government market, a refrigeration system and buildings for various purposes. He also designed a set of the first gold coins in Polynesia, in 1962, of which two hundred and fifty proof sets were minted. A year earlier he had designed a five-stamp special issue set commemorating mail deliveries to the islands from the era of the fishing boat to that of airmail. He designed Tonga's first decimal coin set in 1965.

Dudley Blakely ascended to the Abhá Kingdom on 19 December 1982 from his homefront post in St. Simons Island, Georgia,

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U.S.A. Recognizing his many years of dedicated service, the Universal House of Justice, when word came of his death, cabled on 19 January 1983:

DEEPLY SADDENED RECENT PASSING KNIGHT OF BAHAUILLAH DUDLEY MOORE BLAKELY WHO PIONEERING SERVICES GRATEFULLY REMEMBERED. KINDLY CONVEY HIS WIDOW JUDY OUR LOVING SYMPATHY ASSURANCE OUR ARDENT PRAYERS FOR PROGRESS HIS SOUL AND HER FULL RECOVERY FROM RECENT ILLNESS.

GULDÁNÍH YÚSIFÍ 'ALÍPÚR
1918-1982

Mrs. Guldáníh Yúsifí 'Alípúr, daughter of Fath'alí, was born in 1918 to a Muslim family in the village of Sádát Mahallih, situated in the Chahár Dángih section of Sári, which is five kilometres from Rawshankúh, a Bahá'í village. About fifty years ago she married Mr. Fath'alí 'Alípúr, a Bahá'í from the village of Kandas Bun, adjacent to Rawshankúh. She developed a great love for the Cause and encouraged her children to be pious and to follow the teachings of the Faith; she even assisted them in the performance of their spiritual obligations and duties. Her two daughters and one son had Bahá'í marriages had and have been very staunch and steadfast believers. Mrs. 'Alípúr enrolled as a Bahá'í in 1979.

During the disturbances in Kandas Bun which started in the early summer of 1982, the family of Mr. Fath'alí 'Alípúr, and especially this dear lady, led the friends in setting an example of constancy. Although the instigators and the evildoers were Mrs. 'Alípúr's nieces, nephews and other relatives, and despite the fact that she was the target of most of the attacks, her family was the last one to leave Kandas Bun. Mrs. 'Alípúr, who was sixty-five years old, and whose back was bent, who walked with a cane and was physically frail, was repeatedly beaten, together with her husband, and even dishonoured. At one point their adversaries urinated on them and forced into their mouths a stick covered with human excrement.

The essential occupation of the inhabitants of this region is tending cattle. After the afflicted friends were forced to evacuate Kandas Bun they took refuge in Rawshankúh. Mr. Fath'alí 'Alípúr and his son, 'Alí, created a temporary pasture for their cattle in Gáv Bunih which lies between the two villages. On Friday, 24 December 1982 at about 2:00 p.m. an unknown number of persons hostile to the Faith appeared in Gáv Bunih, strangled Guldáníh, and set fire to her body. They burned Gáv Bunih and all the forage. They even inflicted a wound on a sheep. When the grandson of Guldáníh returned from grazing the cattle at 4:00 p.m. he discovered the burnt body of his grandmother and hastened to inform the friends and other members of the family. The incident was reported to the police in Kíyásar. At noon the next day members of the police force arrived on the scene and, at about 3:00 p.m., the official medical doctor and the interrogator from the Public Prosecutor's office in Sári. The doctor confirmed that Guldáníh 'Alípúr had been strangled prior to being set ablaze and issued a permit for burial. Her body was so burnt, especially the upper part and about the chest, that it was not possible to wash it properly, but a full Bahá'í burial was accorded her before she was finally laid to rest in the Bahá'í cemetery of Rawshankúh.

(Translated from the Persian by BAHARIEH MA'ÁNÍ)

AMINE MESBAH

(AMÍN'U'LLÁH MISBÁH)

1905-1982

JEANNE MESBAH

(MARIE-JEANNE IRADY MISBÁH)

1909-1983

DEEPLY GRIEVED PASSING STAUNCH DEVOTED PROMOTER FAITH AMINULLAH MESBAH. HIS PIONEERING SERVICES THREE CONTINENTS HIS SCHOLARLY WORK HIS SPIRIT UTTER DEDICATION WILL ALWAYS BE REMEMBERED AND SERVE AS INSPIRATION HIS COUNTLESS ADMIRERS. CONVEY LOVING SYMPATHY MEMBERS FAMILY. PRAYING HOLY SHRINES PROGRESS HIS NOBLE SOUL ABHA KINGDOM. Universal House of Justice, 30 December 1982

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DEEPLY GRIEVED PASSING JEANNE MESBAH. HER RADIANT SPIRIT HER DEVOTED PIONEERING ACTIVITIES HER WHOLEHEARTED SUPPORT SERVICES HER BELOVED HUSBAND WILL ALWAYS TENDERLY REMEMBERED. PRAYING SHRINES NOBLE SOUL THIS DISTINGUISHED REPRESENTATIVE BASQUE PEOPLE WILL CONTINUE UNFOLD PROGRESS ABHA KINGDOM. EXTENDED HEARTFELT SYMPATHY MEMBERS FAMILY. Universal House of Justice, 14 April 1983

All those in Europe, Asia and Africa who knew Dr. Amín'u'lláh Misbáh remember having been in contact with an exceptional personality. His deep knowledge of the Faith, his global vision of events, his scientific mind, his literary aptitude and his poetic gifts made of him a man open to every avenue of culture. He was not a public speaker nor an eloquent leader of the multitudes, but rather a fascinating interlocutor whose lucid and intuitive sensibilities inspired in all whom he met a recognition of a reality beyond the moment and beyond material existence, that of the image of God which he carried within him.

A physician, the confidant of the most intimate sufferings, a member of Assemblies, a witness of the most private individual problems, he was attentive and close to every heart, listening to every person who unburdened himself to him, yet he roused and stirred up these same people in the name of the glorious destiny promised to their souls.

All those who came from near or far to seek his opinion, an elucidation or an explanation and who submitted to him the fruit of their research or a manuscript found him to be of valuable assistance and a source of knowledge. Never did he avoid answering even at risk of breaking the contact through his complete frankness and the boldness of his remarks: his moral integrity would not brook any compromise.

This erudite Persian who had access to the Arab and French cultures, this tormented and lucid poet, this scholar who even at an advanced age regarded science with the enthusiasm and wonderment of an adolescent, consecrated his life to the Bahá'í ideal which inspired him. All his life — not easy, monotonous or banal — was marked and guided by the personality of Shoghi Effendi.

Amín'u'lláh Misbáh, born in Tíhrán in 1905, came from a family whose maternal and paternal roots go back to the very beginnings of the new Dispensation. His father, 'Azízu'lláh Misbáh, director of the Tarbíyat School, was an eminent poet and writer; his mother, Qudsíyyih 'Alá'í, was

the sister of the Hand of the Cause Shu'á'u'lláh 'Alá'í. From his earliest years Amín'u'lláh captivated those around him by his literary talents and his scientific gifts. Enamoured of literature and passionately devoted to science, he cultivated these two interests throughout his life, aligning oriental mysticism to occidental rationalism.

After he completed his studies at the Tarbíyat School chance, in the garb of a competitive examination, opened the door to the study in France of biology and medicine. Then, at the Institute of Physiopathology in the Paris Faculty of Medicine, he undertook research on the physiology of the anterior hypophysis. The publications which resulted from his work are, in large part, the source of our understanding of certain diseases of this gland.

He married Marie-Jeanne Irady, a French Bahá'í, and started his life with her in 1937 with a pilgrimage to the Holy Land where they met the Guardian. He then returned to Írán and joined the Faculty of Medicine in Tihrán as a professor. It was evident that a comfortable and tranquil university career seemed to await him, but such was not the destiny nor the desire of the young couple. In 1942, as soon as Amín and Jeanne heard the Guardian's call for pioneers in the forty-five month Plan assigned to the Bahá'í community of Írán, they arose and settled with their son in Afghanistan where they remained until 1945, isolated from the world and unable to communicate with anyone, but happy to have been able to respond to the appeal of the Guardian. After persevering for three years, tired, indebted and with the life of their forty-day-old daughter in jeopardy, they returned to Írán.

Amín took up again his teaching position on the Faculty of Medicine and opened a medical practice. He also devoted much energy to the Bahá'í community, serving as a member of the Local Spiritual Assembly of Tihrán, of com-

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Two Pictures at the Top of the Page:

Caption of Picture in the Upper Left Corner: Jeanne Mesbah

Caption of Picture in the Upper Right Corner: Amine Mesbah

mittees, of commissions and of the Board of Directors of Missaghiyeh (Míthaqíyih) Hospital. His life and that of his family again appeared to be laid out: intense Bahá'í activity and the sustained pursuit of his professional and scientific interests provided material, intellectual and spiritual satisfaction and comfort. Once more the call of the Guardian — the launching of the Ten Year Plan — disrupted the organized pattern of their lives. Without regrets, Amín and Jeanne with their two children abandoned family, friends, school, profession and secure future to throw themselves, as did so many others, into the adventure of the Ten Year Crusade.

In Ethiopia, from 1955 to 1959, Amín, while consecrating himself to teaching the Faith, carried on his profession and obtained the position of military doctor in Asmara. In Morocco, from 1959 to 1969, he was chief physician of the

anatomopathology laboratory. And finally, in France, at the service of the International Pioneer Committee of the United States, he took advantage of his retirement. During his last ten years, at the suggestion of the Universal House of Justice, he conducted historical research in Paris at the National Library and in the Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs which brought to light material that has already served historians of the Faith.

This itinerant life (never more than ten years in one place), this life with no rest (for he was always at the service of the ill and was active in Bahá'í teaching activities), was for Amín a source of inexhaustible enrichment and of poetic inspiration, for he was one of those who offer humanity, in the form of an enduring work, the fruit of every ordeal and joy. His literary work consists primarily of poems inspired by events of the moment, happy or sad, and dedicated to his venerated parents, to his dear wife, to his children and grandchildren, or to the launching of the Ten Year Crusade, to the conquests of the pioneers, to the glory of the Guardian or in honour of the establishment of the Universal House of Justice. During the last period of his life he laboured relentlessly on the epic task of writing the history of the Bahá'í Faith in

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verse. He had ardently hoped to finish this work, but on 29 December 1982, when he was in full possession of his physical and intellectual forces, a cerebral haemorrhage carried him off leaving his friends, his family and in particular his wife, Jeanne, in profound dismay. Their destinies had been so intimately linked that his companion and partner in a life he laboured relentlessly on the epic task of writing the history of the Bahá'í Faith in the Abhá Kingdom a scant three-and-a-half months later on 14 April 1983. Forty-seven years of life together had welded inseparably these two beings, so different and so complementary.

In contrast to Amín who had tormented and hidden depths, Jeanne was elegant, fascinating, enchanting and lively, and travelled through life like a ray of sunshine. Armed with her bright and sparkling smile, her polished speech and her refined manners she set out to conquer the most morose dispositions and the most reticent hearts; she faced ticklish situations with equanimity and was at ease in the drawing-rooms of the great of this world. She was born on 27 March 1909 to a Catholic family in Biarritz, a Basque area, where traditions and values seemed fixed for eternity. As a child she aspired to a secure and tranquil life without surprises, but a serious and protracted illness at an early age led her to reflect and meditate upon life and death. As a student in Paris she accepted the Bahá'í Faith through May Maxwell and frequented the homes of such early Bahá'ís as Mme Dreyfus-Barney, Miss Edith Sanderson and Mme Scott. She met Amín in the Bahá'í meetings and found herself, as a result of her marriage, embarked upon an epic adventure. 'You must be proud to belong to the Misbáh family,' the Guardian told her in the early days of her married life. She found herself in Írán, a young and inexperienced Bahá'í, a refined and emancipated woman in the grip of foreign customs; but Amín's family welcomed her, and her sincerity and radiance opened many doors and won

for her acceptance and love. Later she found herself pioneering — she who had nothing of the adventurer in her — not hesitating to encourage or support her husband in hazardous enterprises or to enlist his energetic aid in projects in which she was sure she could succeed.

Having proved herself and gained confidence by serving on various committees in Írán and particularly on the East-West Committee, she continued to serve wherever she found herself. She was a member of the Regional Assembly of North-east Africa. She travelled, using her natural charm and her ease of expression (in French, English, Persian and Italian) to meet and interest people. Always she represented the Faith with dignity. She was in touch with the authorities in Djibouti, then a French dependency, gave French lessons to the daughter of the king (Negus) of Ethiopia, became secretary to the viceroy in Eritrea, and the President of the Alliance Francaise in Asmara. The Guardian pointed out to her in 1953 that he had inscribed the Basque country on the map of the Ten Year Plan. Proud of being the first Basque Bahá'í Jeanne, following Shoghi Effendi's instructions, had a text of Bahá'u'lláh translated by the Director of the Basque museum in Bayonne.

Jeanne took pleasure in measuring the path she had followed since accepting the Faith. She, who had struggled so much, communicated a climate of peace, of quietude and of certitude. She had an expansive nature and could listen for hours to complaints and sighs; she knew how to comfort the saddest soul.

Amín and Jeanne spent the last years of their lives near their children in France in an Alsatian village called Hegenheim on the borders of three countries, France, Switzerland and Germany. After a full life they took their flight to the Abhá Kingdom. Even their departure provided opportunity to proclaim, as the local newspaper reported, that the fate of humanity depends upon its acceptance of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh.

(Adapted from a memoir by DR. A. CH. MISBÁH and LEYLA MISBÁH SABÉRAN; translated from the French by DIANE STARCHER)

STANWOOD COBB

1881-1982

At the passing of our dearly loved and greatly missed Stanwood Cobb — noted Bahá'í lecturer, educator and author — the following

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telegram was received from the Universal House of Justice:

GRIEVED PASSING STANWOOD COBB. HIS LONGTIME SERVICES CAUSE BEGINNING AS CONTRIBUTOR STAR OF THE WEST AND SUBSEQUENTLY COEDITOR WORLD ORDER MAGAZINE EARNED HIGH PRAISE BELOVED GUARDIAN. HIS SCHOLARLY ACHIEVEMENTS SPECIALLY FIELD EDUCATION HAVE GREATLY ENRICHED LITERATURE FAITH. PRAYING HOLY SHRINES PROGRESS HIS SOUL ABHA KINGDOM. 31 December 1982

Dr. Cobb passed away at age one hundred and one in his home in Chevy Chase, Maryland, on 29 December 1982, having achieved his ambition to live for a full

century. During the final weeks of his life he often referred to his last meeting with 'Abdu'l-Bahá which occurred in Washington: ' ... He embraced me at the end, kissed me, and said three times, Be on fire with the love of the Kingdom!' Stanwood Cobb was indeed on fire with the love of the Kingdom to his last breath after some seventy-five years of service to the Bahá'í Faith.

To review Dr. Cobb's life is to make a beautiful and heavenly journey through those marvellous years beginning with the early dawn of the Bahá'í Faith in the United States when news of this 'new Revelation' and of the presence of 'Abdu'l-Bahá in the Holy Land reached the ears of a few 'ready souls', aroused their curiosity, quickened their hearts and resulted in their making their way to 'Akká in an ever-increasing stream to enter the Master's presence.

Picture in Lower Left Corner with the Caption: Stanwood Cobb

An account of Dr. Cobb's introduction to the Bahá'í Faith in 1906 is given in his Memories of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and in Star of the West, Vol. 15, No. 1, April 1924: He was at that time studying for the Unitarian ministry at the Harvard Divinity School but was drawn to Green Acre in Maine as a result of a series of weekly articles in the Boston Transcript. Miss Sarah Farmer introduced Dr. Cobb to the singer, Mary Lucas, who had just returned from visiting 'Abdu'l-Bahá. ' ... within half an hour from that moment I became a confirmed Bahá'í and have remained so ever since,' Dr. Cobb wrote.

After graduating from Dartmouth College and taking an M.A. in philosophy and comparative religion at Harvard, Dr. Cobb served as an instructor at Robert College in Constantinople from 1907 to 1910, an experience that led to the publication of his first book The Real Turk. During this interval Dr. Cobb met 'Abdu'l-Bahá on two occasions. The first meeting was in 1908 when 'Abdu'l-Bahá was still a prisoner of the Turks. On this occasion the pilgrim disguised himself as a Turk in order to attain the Master's presence, spending several days as a guest in His home in 'Akká. Mrs. Lua Getsinger, whom Dr. Cobb had encountered by chance in Cairo, had encouraged him to accompany her on this most significant of journeys.

'Again it was my privilege to visit 'Abdu'l-Bahá in the summer of 1910,' writes Dr. Cobb, 'and this time at His own invitation ... spending a week there in the Persian guest house on the slopes of Mt. Carmel ... He seemed to me more noble in countenance, more regal in bearing, more potent in the power of His presence than ever before.'

Later Dr. Cobb was to again enter the presence of 'Abdu'l-Bahá in France and in the United States during the course of the Master's historic travels. Dr. Cobb related

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that while teaching at Robert College he suffered severe depression. During the course of one of his visits to the Master, 'Abdu'l-Bahá took him aside, held his hand and sat with him quietly. The depression lifted and never returned. Indeed, sunniness of disposition, cheerfulness of outlook and uncomplaining

acceptance became Stanwood Cobb's outstanding characteristics.

He returned to the United States from Constantinople to pursue a career in education and writing. He published approximately twenty books on religion, education and philosophy, and several volumes of verse. He made his home in Chevy Chase, Maryland, where, in 1918, he organized the Progressive Education Association which has exerted a profound influence on education in the United States. He established the Chevy Chase Country Day School where he was able to put into effect his ideas about education. His wife, Nayam Whitlam, a Canadian Bahá'í, was of considerable assistance in this activity until their retirement in 1958. In 1935 Dr. Cobb founded Avalon Press through which he published his works. Some of his better known publications that deal with the principles of the Bahá'í Faith are *Security for a Failing World*, *Tomorrow and Tomorrow*, *Islám's Contribution to Civilization* and the pamphlet *America's Spiritual Destiny*. Among his books dealing with the development of the individual are *Discovering the Genius Within You* — a book which proved very popular — and *Character: A Sequence in Spiritual Psychology* His autobiography, *Saga: A Tale of Two Centuries*, appeared in 1977.

In 1924 Dr. Cobb was invited to serve as editor of *Star of the West* and until 1939 he acted as co-editor of its successor, *World Order*, with various distinguished Bahá'ís including Mariam Haney, Horace Holley, Edna True and Jináb-i-Fádíl. Almost every issue of this publication carries an editorial signed or initialled by Dr. Cobb on a large variety of significant topics reflecting his wide range of interests. He was a popular lecturer on the Faith at public functions and informal firesides and a sought-after teacher at Summer Schools. To the end of his life he possessed an amazing memory for names, dates, places and historical facts, and seldom if ever used notes when giving an address. He kept well informed about current events and world affairs. He was a member of the Spiritual Assembly of Washington, D.C., at the time of its incorporation in 1933, and until his one hundredth birthday frequently lectured at the weekly public meetings held at the Bahá'í Centre there. He mingled with noted authors at the Washington Cosmos Club of which he was a member, and had many distinguished friends among the clergy.

Shoghi Effendi warmly appreciated Dr. Cobb's services to the Faith as the following excerpt, appended in the Guardian's hand to a letter written on his behalf on 5 September 1943, attests:

'... Your services to our beloved Faith have been such as to reflect lustre on its institutions and literature, and I pray from the depths of my hart that Bahá'u'lláh may graciously guide and assist you to render through your able and ready pen still greater and more distinguished services.'

Although content with a simple life style, Dr. Cobb was a highly cultivated person and had a taste for the arts. He believed strongly in and greatly valued the power of prayer, and many of his friends would come to ask for prayers on their behalf. Often he could be seen sitting on his porch at Chevy Chase or on the screened veranda at Green Acre meditating and supplicating on behalf of

loved ones. Young people sought him out and he was something of the 'wise man' in our midst. He loved youth and had great faith in their potential. Always he urged them to immerse themselves in the Teachings, acquire spiritual virtues and — in the words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá — Be on fire with the love of the Kingdom! He was a happy man and whatever he did seemed to be achieved without stress, strain or struggle. Vigorous and young at heart, he was a frequent guest at youth conferences.

Dr. Cobb's passing to the eternal realm robs us of yet another precious link with the early period in the rise of the Bahá'í Faith when seekers hastened to the presence of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and returned home to inspire others with the Glad Tidings and to strive zealously to lay the foundations of the burgeoning World Order of Bahá'u'lláh.

(Adapted from a memoir by RUTH L. DUNBAR)

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Picture in Upper Left Corner with the Caption: Mírzá Áqá Kamálí -Sarvistání

MÍRZÁ ÁQÁ KAMÁLÍ-SARVISTÁNÍ
1924-1983

Knight of Bahá'u'lláh

They that have forsaken their country in the path of God and subsequently ascended unto His presence, such souls shall be blessed by the Concourse on High and their names recorded by the Pen of Glory among such as have laid down their lives as martyrs in the path of God, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsistent. Bahá'u'lláh

The above words of the Blessed Beauty apply to Mírzá Áqá Khán Kamálí -Sarvistání. Early in the Ten Year Crusade he opened the island of Socotra to the Faith, for which service he was named by the beloved Guardian a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh. In letters written on Shoghi Effendi's behalf it was stated that the Guardian was praying for the accomplishment of the difficult task Mr. Kamálí had undertaken and that he expressed deep appreciation for his sacrificial services. The bounty of receiving such loving and encouraging messages delighted Mr. Kamálí's heart, rejoiced his spirit and further enkindled his eagerness to serve the Cause.

Mr. Kamálí was born in June 1924 in Sarvistán, a town in Fárs Province, Írán. During the thirty years he spent in the Arabic-speaking countries in which he chose to serve he was a source of encouragement and inspiration for his fellow pioneers. He was a knowledgeable and popular teacher at the Bahá'í Summer Schools where he conducted classes for the youth on the history and principles of the Faith. How eager he was to be at his pioneering post when it came time to leave this mortal life!

The day after his passing on 1 February 1983, friends from many Bahá'í centres gathered to honour him, their hearts filled with love for this departed

friend. The dignity and serenity which were characteristic of Mr. Kamálí during his earthly life and which reflected his qualities of resignation and contentment were visible in his beautiful countenance after his death. It was a glorious funeral service, befitting that devoted and faithful servant of Bahá'u'lláh, and bringing comfort to his family and friends in their loss.

The services of Mr. Kamálí were crowned by the cable received from the Universal House of Justice on 23 February:

EXPRESS SYMPATHY FRIENDS RELATIVES PASSING KNIGHT BHAULLAH MIRZA AQA KHAN KAMALI SARVISTANI. ASSURE LOVING PRAYERS PROGRESS SOUL ABHA KINGDOM. HIS STEADFASTNESS HISTORIC SERVICES LOVINGLY REMEMBERED.

JACOB EDUARD (BOB) VAN LITH

1922-1983

On Sunday, 10 April 1983, members of the Bahá'í community of Haarlem, the Netherlands, gathered to remember their departed friend and to pray for his soul in the Abhá Kingdom. The news of Bob van Lith's passing was totally unexpected for most, who were grateful for the assurance given by his son-in-law, Hugo van Bolhuis, that Bob had not suffered from his illness, and had passed away in peace, deeply trusting in the Faith, with his wife, Marijke, and his daughters, Patricia,

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Carolien and Monette, by his side. At the close of the commemorative meeting the cablegram sent by the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Suriname on 9 March was read:

GRIEVED PASSING VALIANT SERVANT CAUSE JACOBUS VAN LITH. RECALL WITH ADMIRATION HIS THIRTY YEARS CONTINUOUS SERVICE REGIONAL ASSEMBLY BENELUX COUNTRIES AND NATIONAL ASSEMBLY NETHERLANDS FOLLOWED BY PIONEERING SURINAME ELECTION FIRST NATIONAL ASSEMBLY THAT COUNTRY. HIS OUTGOING PERSONALITY SAGACITY WARM HEART EXEMPLARY CHARACTER TIRELESS LABORS FAITH ENDEARED HIM FELLOW BELIEVERS ENABLING HIM ADVANCE FAITH BHAULLAH AND RAISE ITS PRESTIGE EYES HIS COUNTRYMEN. CONVEY LOVING SYMPATHY WIFE FAMILY ASSURANCE OUR FERVENT PRAYERS HOLY SHRINES PROGRESS HIS LOYAL SOUL WORLDS GOD.

Bob van Lith, together with his wife Marijke, accepted the Bahá'í Faith in January 1952. From that moment on he served the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh, offering his talents and strengths in all fields of the work of the ever-expanding Bahá'í community.

Picture in Lower Left Corner with the Caption: Jacob Eduard (Bob) van Lith

From its inception, he was a member of the Bahá'í Benelux Committee, and afterwards served on the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the Benelux which came into being in 1957. When, in 1962, each of these countries (Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg) formed its own National Spiritual Assembly, he served on the Dutch National Spiritual Assembly and was chairman until he left the country.

In 1975 Bob and Marijke responded to the call of the Universal House of Justice for pioneers. Three of their children accompanied them to their chosen goal of Suriname, while the others stayed behind in the Netherlands.

Bob was devoted to the Faith, faithfully fulfilling the duties and obligations he was given, always supported by his Marijke. Every week presented a full round of meetings, committees, study classes. In addition he held an exacting job as a lawyer and an insurance assessor, not to mention his responsibilities towards his growing family. It was a richly blessed family, a hospitable house, a home with magnetic appeal for young and old. Bob's character left its mark on family and friends and on the various parts of the Bahá'í community which he served. He was a born chairman, with attention for everything and everyone, with much patience, much wisdom and especially much humour, with a perfect sense of timing, always acting at the right moment, always to the point, and never hurtful, never causing pain. You could talk to him about yourself, but not about others; the word 'gossip' was not in his vocabulary. He was also an example in the way he was able to separate and confine to its proper sphere such diverse activities as Local Assembly matters, professional and management concerns and personal affairs.

It was, perhaps, his qualities of patience and courtesy which, above others, endeared him to the friends. Now God has called him to Himself. How brave Marijke is, and how faithful and resigned; she needs our prayers and our support.

(Adapted from a memoir by LOTTIE TOBIAS)

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Picture in Upper Left Corner with the Caption: Elizabeth Idang Njang

ELIZABETH IDANG NJANG

1928-1983

Elizabeth Idang Njang was born on 30 July 1928 in a village near Calabar in Nigeria. Having lost her parents at a tender age, she was raised by relatives and became a dedicated member of the Church of Christ. Her first marriage, to a man who developed a serious drinking problem, was doomed to failure. However, a son born of this union eventually embraced the Bahá'í Faith, serving as a Local Spiritual Assembly secretary before his death in the Nigerian civil war.

In 1956 Mrs. Njang met her future husband, Mr. O. E. Njang, who is at present a member of the Auxiliary Board in Nigeria. They were both attending a ceremony at which palm wine, the traditional alcoholic beverage, was being served. She noticed that he alone was abstaining from the drink. Her curiosity about the Faith was aroused as she heard him telling others about Bahá'u'lláh. She began to attend deepening sessions conducted by Mr. Njang and three other friends. Within a year she embraced the Faith and returned to her former church where she audaciously announced to the congregation that Christ had returned in the Glory of the Father. This event, while earning her an immediate expulsion from the church, marked the beginning of a quarter century of dedicated service

to the Bahá'í Cause.

In 1958 Mrs. Njang was appointed a full-time teacher by the then National Spiritual Assembly of North West Africa and in the same year she and her husband brought the Message of Bahá'u'lláh to the Ejagham tribe in southeastern Nigeria. Finally, at the annual Convention in Victoria, Western Cameroon, in 1960, she so impressed the delegates with her devotion and dynamism that the attending Hands of the Cause of God referred to her as 'the Táhirih of Nigeria'.

She was elected to the National Spiritual Assembly of West Central Africa in 1967. Prior to this she had served as chairman of the National Teaching Committee of the Bahá'ís of Nigeria and as Local Spiritual Assembly chairman for many years. In 1979 she organized a Bahá'í women's conference in the Calabar-Mamfe area which was attended by more than one hundred Bahá'í women.

Eventually Mrs. Njang decided to return to her home village to engage in farming to help feed her orphaned grandchildren and to deepen three new Local Spiritual Assemblies in the area. Finally, on 17 March 1983, she passed away after a brief illness and was laid to rest in the presence of approximately one hundred of the friends.

In a country where the ministry is frequently viewed as a means of attaining material enrichment, Mrs. Njang was often ridiculed for being a 'woman pastor' of a 'church' which did not remunerate its workers. She would reply to such derision by explaining that she and her husband were in reality the wealthy ones; although perhaps not in a material sense. On a continent where women are only beginning to develop their latent potentialities she is remembered as an outstanding example for the Bahá'í women of Africa, and elsewhere, to emulate.

On learning of Mrs. Njang's death the Universal House of Justice sent the following cable to the National Spiritual Assembly of Nigeria on 28 March 1983:

DEEPLY GRIEVED PASSING DEVOTED HAND-

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MAID BAHULLAH ELIZABETH IDANG NJANG. HER SPIRIT DEDICATION HER ACTIVE SERVICES FAITH WORTHY EMULATION HER COWORKERS AND RISING GENERATION PROMOTERS GODS H CAUSE. CONVEY RELATIVES LOVING SYMPATHY. ASSURE FERVENT PRAYERS HOLY SHRINES PROGRESS HER SOUL ABHA KINGDOM.

SHARON RICKEY KAZEMI (KÁZIMÍ)

1949-1983

Sharon Rickey, daughter of Horace B. Rickey Jr. and Jewel Katherine Seybold, was born in Lafayette, Louisiana. She attended Hamilton School, Chateau Mon Choisi, Lausanne, Switzerland, and graduated as a National Merit Scholar from Lafayette High School. She received a B.A. in English literature from Middlebury College, Middlebury, Vermont, and her Mater's and D.E.D. degrees in African literature from the University of Abidjan. Before becoming a Bahá'í,

Sharon was active in many civic organizations, as a Girl Scout leader and as a Red Cross worker, and she performed valuable services on several committees of the First Presbyterian Church of Lafayette. She was interested in musical and theatrical presentations as evidenced by her membership in the Middlebury College Choir, and by her association with and participation in a number of plays and musicals both in Vermont and in Louisiana where she played the lead in a production of *My Fair Lady*. In sports, she became a champion fencer, and she achieved a measure of public notice as the State secretary of the 'Young Republicans'. She was brought up in a religious family. Her parents, staunch Christians, taught her the equality of men without distinction as to race or religion. When at the age of twenty she became acquainted with the Bahá'í Faith, the new Revelation was the embodiment of the spiritual truths she had been taught.

Picture in Upper Right Corner with the Caption: Sharon Rickey Kazemi (Kázimí)

Sharon's varied activities at Middlebury College ultimately led her into contact with a Bahá'í who proceeded to explain to her the spiritual realities of Bahá'u'lláh's divine economy. She faced each principle determined to prove it wrong; yet after each bout, returned convinced and ready to argue another point. It was during an adult Christian baptism in the College Chapel that she realized that her answer was not in partisan politics in which she had been so active but in that divine polity being built by Bahá'u'lláh's followers. That very day she declared her belief with characteristic bravado, rushing into the room of her Bahá'í friend and demanding enrollment on the spot. Hers had been the real 'baptism'. Sharon retired from her political connections as time and opportunity permitted. She worked assiduously over the next two years to allay the fears of relatives and friends who believed that she had been misled. Some of their misgivings were softened when Sharon's great-aunt remarked, 'I heard 'Abdu'l-Bahá speak in 1912. There is nothing wrong with Sharon's being a Bahá'í. Any religion which has 'Abdu'l-Bahá is good.'

In 1972 Sharon pioneered to the Ivory Coast where, in the same year, she married Zekrullah Kazemi (Dhikru'lláh Kázimí) whose appointment to the Continental Board of Counsellors was announced in May 1973. Her dynamic enthusiasm and vitality inspired all who met her. For several years she was a member and secretary of the National Spiri-

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tual Assembly of the Ivory Coast, Mali and Upper Volta. She also performed sterling service as a member of a number of national committees including the National Women's Committee and the National Teaching Committee of which she was secretary. From 1974 to 1979 she labored diligently as secretary in the office of the Continental Board of Counsellors for West Africa. She served at the same time and until the end of her life as member-at-large of the Continental Pioneering Committee for Africa, as well as performing additional services for the Continental Board and in translation work. During part of her pioneering career, she relocated to the northern areas of the Ivory Coast, areas which

have seen dramatic increases in numbers of Bahá'í believers.

Besides her work for the Bahá'í Faith, Sharon was equally energetic in other activities. She taught English at Bingerville High School, at the Center for Audio-Visual Research and Studies, and in the English Department of the University of Abidjan. She also served as an interpreter with a number of organizations. She was a member of the Ensemble Vocal d'Abidjan, a well-known choir in the Ivory Coast. She was at the same time preparing her doctoral thesis in African literature.

Her passion was teaching the Faith and she did not hesitate to sacrifice her health and life for this noble aim. For her, to be a pioneer meant to stay in the pioneering post until the end of one's life. For this reason she wished to die and be buried in Africa. It was a wish that was, alas, prematurely realized. In March 1983 she contracted severe amoebiasis which attacked her body already weakened by chronic diabetes. At dawn on 4 April her pure soul winged its flight to the Abhá Kingdom. Her earthly remains were buried at Niangon-Attie close to the site of Ivory Coast's future Bahá'í Temple. Sharon is survived by her husband; her parents; two children, Jaleh Katherine and Ryan; and two sisters, Marjorie Rickey and Priscilla Rickey Forest. At her passing these cablegrams were addressed to her family on 5 April:

PROFOUNDLY SADDENED PASSING BELOVED WIFE SHARON, HER DEVOTED PIONEERING SERVICES LOVINGLY REMEMBERED. PRAYING SHRINES PROGRESS HER SOUL ABHA KINGDOM. ASSURE YOU ALL RELATIVES HEARTFELT SYMPATHY. Universal House of Justice

NEWS PASSING YOUR DEAR WIFE SHARON DEVOTED STEADFAST SERVANT OF THE CAUSE EXEMPLARY PIONEER FILLED OUR HEARTS WITH SORROW AND SADNESS. WE SHARE YOUR GRIEF AND ASSURE YOU OUR PRAYERS AT THE HOLY THRESHOLDS FOR ELEVATION PROGRESS. HER SOUL AND GOD GRANT YOU STRENGTH TO WITHSTAND THIS HEARTRENDING TEST. International Teaching Centre

A subsequent cable dated 8 April offered the consolation of the assurance of continued prayers by the Universal House of Justice for the progress of Sharon's 'radiant soul'.

Sharon's knowledge of the Holy Writings, her sharp memory and her genial intelligence made her a rare asset to the Bahá'í community of West Africa. Her loss was deeply felt, for she was at once a strengthening and stabilizing influence in the administrative institutions of the Ivory Coast, and a beloved teacher who won the hearts of many to the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh. And more than this, she proved herself a true friend, always ready to extend that Bahá'í friendship which is the hallmark of those who have truly imbibed the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá. It is in her acts of generosity, unfeigned fellowship, and pure love that Sharon Kazemi lives in the hearts of those who knew her. Her services and untainted life must surely find an honored place in the annals of the Cause of God in the African continent.

WILLIAM P. COLLINS

FELICITY ENAYAT

ZEKRULLAH KAZEMI (DHIKRU'LLÁH KÁZIMÍ)

DORIS HOLLEY

1894-1983

...PASSING DISTINGUISHED MAIDSERVANT BHAULLAH DORIS HOLLEY ROBS IRISH BAHAI COMMUNITY OUTSTANDING MEMBER ACTIVELY ASSOCIATED EARLY DAYS FORMATIVE AGE CAUSE. HER STERLING SERVICES IN STAUNCH

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SUPPORT CLOSE COOPERATION HAND CAUSE HORACE HOLLEY WERE LATER ENRICHED AS PIONEER CONTINENTAL EUROPE AND FINALLY HER DEARLY LOVED IRELAND. HER CHEERFUL GENEROUS SPIRIT CONTRIBUTED CORDIALITY UNITY MANY BAHAI OCCASIONS. ASSURE LOVING PRAYERS PROGRESS HER SOUL. Universal House of Justice, 4 April 1983

Doris Holley, whose maiden name was Pascal, was born in London on 14 August 1894. She had two brothers and a sister. Her father was a concert pianist. Always a seeker of truth, he became, in turn, a Swedenborgian and a Christian Scientist. Her mother was not much interested in religion and considered it an unsuitable subject of conversation. When Doris was five years old, her parents moved to the United States of America. Four years later, while her father remained in a boarding house in New Rochelle, New York, her mother took the children to live in Barbados, West Indies.

While she was growing up, Doris liked to get off by herself and read. When she reached sixteen her mother said to her, 'I will find some way of making you do as I wish.' Doris then resolved to leave home as soon as she could. In the autumn of 1912 her mother sent Doris to Paris to study for a year. On her arrival there Doris said to the woman who had agreed to look after her, 'Mother told me that I was not to go out alone in Paris.' The woman replied with amusement, 'Does your mother expect me to engage a nanny to take care of you?'

Picture in Lower Left Corner with the Caption: Doris Holley

One morning in February 1913, a month after 'Abdu'l-Bahá had arrived in Paris to start His second visit to that city, Doris heard Him address a meeting at the home of Hippolyte and Laura Dreyfus-Barney. Although she had already heard His name from Juliet Thompson, she did not realize who He was and knew nothing about the Bahá'í Cause. Doris has said of this, 'I was spiritually asleep at the time, but while I was listening to the Master's talk I felt as if Jesus were speaking and I thought that the Master was saying what Jesus would have said. When the meeting was over, instead of following the Master out of the room as the others in the audience had done, I remained in my chair. The Master soon returned. To my natural astonishment He walked straight up to me and kissed me on the forehead. I still did not recognize who He was.' Ironically, Horace Holley and his wife, Bertha, attended this meeting with their child, Hertha. Doris had not seen them before nor were they introduced on that occasion.

Some weeks after the start of the First World War, in the autumn of 1914, Doris

moved to London and several months later sailed for New York City. After Horace Holley's marriage had foundered he and Doris became friends. Doris had remarked, 'The first time that I saw Horace alone, I thought that our marriage was to be; I married Horace because I liked him, not because he was a Bahá'í.' Doris attended some Bahá'í meetings with Horace. She explained, 'I just gradually learned more about the Cause until I realized that I had become a Bahá'í.' In September 1919 Horace and Doris were married. About a year later she lost her only child at birth.

In the spring of 1925, assured by the National Assembly that such a move would be of much assistance to the Bahá'í community, Horace resigned from his position at the

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Redfield Advertising Agency to devote all his time to secretarial work for the Assembly. Although he and Doris occasionally received help by means of modest inheritances, most of their support for the rest of Horace's life came from the Bahá'í Fund. It cannot have been easy for either of them to accept regular support from this source. That their action would be bountifully blessed finds assurance in Shoghi Effendi's response of 24 October 1925: 'I rejoice to learn that ways and means have been found to enable the National secretary, who discharges in such an exemplary manner the manifold and exacting duties of a highly responsible position, to devote all his time to the pursuit of so meritorious a task. I am fully conscious of the privations and sacrifice which the choice of this arduous work must involve for him, as well as for his devoted and selfless companion; I cannot but admire and extol their heroic efforts, and wish to assure them both of my continued prayers for the speedy fruition of their earnest endeavours.'¹

For the first twenty years of their married life, except for a part of each summer when they occupied a cottage of their own at Green Acre, the Bahá'í School in Eliot, Maine, the Holleys lived in New York City. Although they were happy there, when they realized that the Guardian wanted 'the spiritual and administrative centre to be fused into one', they made plans to change their residence to Wilmette, Illinois. According to Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánúm, late in 1939 the Guardian cabled Horace, AWARE PROFOUNDLY APPRECIATE PERSONAL INCONVENIENCE INVOLVED TRANSFERENCE TEMPLE VICINITY DEEPEST LOVE.²

The American Bahá'í, issue of May 1983, records Doris's service in the United States: membership on the Contracts Committee (1925); the Public Relations Committee (1948-1950); the Bahá'í News Editorial Committee (1949-1950 and 1951-1952); the Temple Hospitality Committee (1953-1958), serving most of that time as committee chairman; and the National Spiritual Assembly's Reviewing Committee (1958-1959). During the years that her husband served as secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly, Doris regularly provided hospitality for the members during breaks in their meetings at the national Hazíratu'l-Quds, and also entertained numerous visitors to the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár.

Early in 1944 Horace had his first serious illness. Although he recovered and

remained in fairly good health until 1949, he was not very well for the rest of his life. When Doris was asked whether it was difficult to take care of him, she said, 'No, I always felt that Bahá'u'lláh was taking care of him. Besides that, Horace always felt that whatever I did was right.'

In his message of 24 December 1951 the Guardian announced to the Bahá'í world the appointment of the first contingent of Hands of the Cause, twelve in number. Horace was one of the three elevated to that rank on the North American continent.³ Two years and a day after the passing of the Guardian in the early hours of 4 November 1957, immediately following their third Conclave, the Hands of the Cause announced their selection of Horace for service in the Holy Land. Horace and Doris reached Haifa on the last day of 1959; Horace passed away there on 12 July 1960. After his death Doris remained in Haifa for a year and kept house for the nine Hands who were serving there, and then began her life as a pioneer.

In November 1961 she settled in Neuchatel, Switzerland, and seven years later she moved to Lausanne. She pioneered for almost a decade in Switzerland. In her letter of 13 May 1983 to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Republic of Ireland, Counsellor Agnes Ghaznavi wrote, 'In spite of the great difference of age, Doris was a very near and dear friend, both to my husband, Bijan, and to myself. Doris had a special quality of understanding people in their difficulties and of using her keen intellect for piercing mysteries in human lives ...'⁴ She is also remembered for her delightful sense of humour that never failed her during her long and distinguished career of service to the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh. Just before she left Switzerland, when it became apparent that her hearing was failing, Doris wrote to a friend announcing her decision to settle in Ireland and remarking wryly that she

1 Shoghi Effendi, Bahá'í Administration, pp. 89-90.

2 The Bahá'í World, vol. XIII, p. 855.

3 Shoghi Effendi, Messages to the Bahá'í World (1950-1957), p. 20.

4 Letter from Dr. Agnes Ghaznavi, Biel, Switzerland.

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might find it easier to be hard of hearing in English than in French.

Early in the summer of 1971 Doris moved to Limerick in the Republic of Ireland. During her early months there she was thrilled to find that a large number of young people were becoming attracted to the Faith. In a warm, sensitive and understanding manner she taught and helped each person with whom she became acquainted. Bahá'ís throughout Ireland, both north and south, had the opportunity of getting to know Doris and of listening to her valuable remarks about the Bahá'í Revelation during the four years she spent in Limerick. The young people who flocked to her confided in the Hand of the Cause of God Rahmatu'lláh Muhájir, 'We cannot talk to our parents, but we can talk to Doris. The age difference is of no importance to us.'

In order to save the Local Spiritual Assembly of Dun Laoghaire from lapsing, Doris moved there just before Ridván 1976. Two years later she transferred her residence to Dublin. In February 1980, after visiting Connecticut for several months, she returned to Ireland and, for the purpose of serving on the Spiritual Assembly of County Wicklow, found a room for herself in a comfortable home in Greystones. A little more than a year before her passing on 4 April 1983, to enable her close friends to reach her without delay if she needed them, Doris lived in a home in Dun Laoghaire, where she was treated with much kindness and consideration. During the last weeks of her life she said happily to some of us, 'I feel that Horace is with me every night.'

Four days after her passing, on a bright, clear Friday afternoon, a moving funeral service was held in the chapel at Deansgrange Cemetery, near Dublin. More than fifty people were in attendance, a few of whom were not members of the Bahá'í community. On this occasion — joyful, yet tinged with sadness — I was privileged to read a poem which Doris had written in 1935:

Let us want everything and nothing,
And only that elusive fire
That burns our wayward consciousness
Into the flow of Thy desire;
That melts the metal of our minds
From separate sparks to liquid flame
And lights the Inner Light;
And melts in tears the veil that hides
from sight
The path — the home — the end —
That is Thy Name.1

- O.Z. WHITEHEAD

ARNOLD ZONNEVELD
1933-1983

GRIEVED LEARN PASSING ARNOLD ZONNEVELD HIS DEDICATED OUTSTANDING SERVICES PIONEER FIELD MERIT GOOD PLEASURE BLESSED BEAUTY. KINDLY CONVEY MEMBERS HIS FAMILY CONDOLENCES LOVING SYMPATHY AND ASSURANCE ARDENT PRAYERS PROGRESS HIS SOUL ABHA KINGDOM. Universal House of Justice, 5 April 1983

Arnold Zonneveld was born in Haarlem, the Netherlands, on 30 March 1933 and died in Cochabamba, Bolivia, on 13 April 1983. This exceptional Bahá'í of Dutch background was known to a very few of his fellow Dutch believers, for barely one year of his twenty-three years of life as a Bahá'í was spent in his home country. Arnold was the example of a born pioneer: he gave up everything in order to settle in the most inhospitable places where he lived in

primitive circumstances and devoted himself to the spiritual and physical well-being of his fellow man. Whether he had to endure bitter cold or terrible heat, whether alone and unmarried or responsible for a large family, Arnold understood the art of being satisfied under all conditions. We can rightly call him a true servant of God.

He was introduced to the Bahá'í Faith by Arnold van Ogtrop, and in 1961, while attending the International Summer School for Youth in Delft, the Netherlands, he met Paul Adams, the Knight of Bahá'u'lláh for Spitsbergen, and heard his account of life in that barren arctic region. Arnold decided to join Paul in Spitsbergen. He served there for three years, working as a hunter and later in coal-mines. The rigorous climate and hard working conditions affected his health and he

1 World Order, vol I, no. 9, p. 354.

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Picture in Upper Left Corner With the Caption: Arnold Zonneveld

had to leave. He returned to Germany and in 1965 married Gisela von Brunn. The following year, inspired by the talks given by Anna Grossmann at the German Summer School, they resolved to pioneer to Latin America. Bolivia seemed to offer the opportunity they sought to actively spread the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh among a receptive population. On 21 November 1966 they arrived in South America with their one-year-old son, Hilmar, and soon settled in Cochabamba.

Arnold's capacity to take up whatever work was available proved especially useful. He took on many projects — woodworking, business, agriculture, cattle breeding — and earned a wide reputation as a trustworthy and competent workman. It was not always a simple matter to earn a livelihood for his growing family and he suffered many setbacks. They received great moral and practical support from Gisela's mother, Ursula von Brunn, who joined them in Cochabamba in September 1967.

The Zonnevelds settled in the centre of the tropical jungle and savannah area, in the Department of Beni, where they located on a piece of land on the Rio Blanco and gave their home the name El Alba (Dawn). El Alba served well as a pioneer post because seven of the eight provinces of Beni can be reached by rivers, there being virtually no roads or other amenities. Equally important, there is a city in the area, Costa Marques, Brazil. There were no Western comforts which meant that basic daily needs occupied a great deal of time, a circumstance which they deeply regretted. The Zonneveld family, which eventually numbered six children, adopted the local way of life as their own. Lumber was difficult to obtain. Although he had never thought he had a talent for technical things, Arnold developed two different guide-systems for chainsaws and began to fell trees and to saw planks. The sale of quality planks became the primary source of income for the family.

Their way of life aroused admiration and astonishment on the part of the native

people and visitors alike. But the Zonnevelds found no solution to the problem of how to free themselves to devote more time to the Bahá'í Faith and to projects that would improve the living conditions of the local people. It was their dearest wish to establish first a primary school and later a trade school for the region, but their appeals for others to join them in the area and lend assistance went unanswered.

Early in 1983 Arnold fell ill. After a long bout of malaria it was discovered that he had a brain tumour which had already developed beyond the stage where it could be treated. On 13 April 1983 he passed away peacefully in the presence of his wife and their two oldest children, supported by the prayers of the Bahá'ís of Cochabamba and other centres. This servant of the Cause of God devoted himself to the service of a special race of people of whom he was very fond. Often the task seemed beyond his strength. His family prays that the effort expended in Cochabamba be not lost and that the promise of success be fully realized. May we remember in our prayers the one who has passed away and also those who live after him.

Extracted from a memoir by MARIJE FIENIEG-JONKERS (Translated from the Dutch by NANCY FOLKEMA)

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