

FEW FACTS CONCERNING THE NEW BAHAI MOVEMENT

In 1844 there arose in Shiraz a young Persian known as the Bab, or Gate. He exhorted the people to purity of life and announced to them the coming of a great one who would shortly bring a universal message to mankind.

The priests feared loss of their own power should such liberal ideas be spread, so they used their influence against the Bab, who was imprisoned and finally shot at Tabriz in 1850.

Before the Bab's death there appeared a rich and powerful man, possessing great knowledge and wisdom. He proclaimed himself a believer in the new teachings and was later accepted as the one whom the Bab had told the people to receive. Baha'o'llah, for such was the name by which he was known, also excited the animosity of the priests, and he was imprisoned, exiled, and finally sent with his family and a small group of faithful followers to the worst of Turkish prisons at Acca, in Syria. Imprisonment in this distant place was accomplished through the co-operation of Turkey and Persia, according to their custom in religious affairs. While traveling in this country, Abdul Baha, the son of Baha'o'llah, in describing some of the experiences in the prison, said: "The people sent to the prison usually died in a few months, but our spirits were never imprisoned, so we lived."

Baha'o'llah constantly exhorted his followers to obedience to the laws of their respective countries, and such was their response that in Southern Russia they were permitted to form a colony and build a temple, having won the confidence of the government.

About 60 years ago, shortly after his arrival at the prison city, Baha'o'llah sent letters to the rulers of the world, asking them to co-operate with him in bringing about world peace. He advocated the establishment of an international court of arbitration, and explained the necessity of a general agreement concerning boundaries of countries.

Baha'o'llah left many books and chose Abdul Baha to explain his ideas to the people of today.

The Bahai cause is an inclusive movement. It asks of its followers the repudiation of no former loyalties, and it teaches that all great spiritual revelations which have come from the divine educators of the past are essentially one and will be so understood when their followers are willing to divest them of the traditions, doctrines and dogmas of man.

The Bahai teaching is conservative. Its aim is the brotherhood of man, but it is not in sympathy with the breaking down of all degrees and distinctions between men as taught by radical thinkers.

BAHAI CONGRESS MEETS

The 13th annual Mashrak'ul-Azkar convention and congress was held by the Bahai Temple Unity in the Auditorium Hotel, April 23-27. Universal principles of unity and peace were presented.

Bahais over the world feel that the Bahai principles are the best solution for the race problem that has ever been evolved. Among Bahais there is absolutely no difference in races, they "live the life" and prove that all humanity are the "leaves of one tree, the drops of one sea," as the founder, Baha'o'llah, taught.

A big feature of the convention were addresses concerning the first Bahai Temple of the Western world, which is being built at Wilmette, Sheridan road and Linden avenue. This universal temple has been contributed to by men and women from all parts of the world who are working for universal religion and brotherhood. It is called in Persian "Mashrak'ul-Azkar," which means "Dawning Point of Praises to God." It will be a universal house of worship, open to all sects and religions.

Work on the temple has begun. Nine great caissons are almost down 120 feet to solid rock foundation. These nine foundation columns will support the immense structure of steel and concrete.

This temple will be set in a circular garden with nine fountains. It will be approached by nine paths through the garden. There will be nine doors, symbolizing the many roads through which those of different religions come to the temple of unity, and laying aside dogmas that divide they will worship together under the dome of unity. All divine religions hold some points in common. There will be nine chapels in which different religionists can always go and each hold any service he wishes in his own chapel.

The Universal services will be held every morning and evening. The temple will be dedicated to the oneness of humanity; independent investigation of truth; equality between men and women; prejudices of all kinds must be forgotten; spiritual solution of the economic problem and a spiritualized League of Nations.

As Abdul Baha says: "The gates of the temple will be flung wide open to mankind; prejudice toward none, love for all. The central building will be devoted to the purposes of prayer and worship. Thus for the first time religion will become harmonized with science and science will be the handmaid of religion, both showering their material and spiritual gifts on all humanity."

One of the speakers at the convention was Janabe Fazel Mazandarani, a celebrated scholar of Persia, formerly professor of philosophy and jurisprudence in the University of the Shah in Teheran, Persia. He has been touring the United States and Canada in the interest of a closer unity between the Orient and Occident. He has spoken in most of the great cities of this continent—to men's clubs, women's clubs, chambers of commerce, labor groups, universities, churches, synagogues. He is a universal mind who appeals to all types, sects and religions. After several engagements in Chicago he will go to Washington, D. C., where he is to speak late in May at a Race's convention and in several colleges.

Louis Gregory of Washington, D. C., made an eloquent address on "The Oneness of Mankind."