

Bahais Bring Unity Message to Convention

Oneness of Mankind and Religion Stressed as Factors in Universal Peace Plan

If you tell a disciple of the Bahai faith that you would like to become a Bahai and ask him how about it, he'll tell you he's not sure that you can be one. They hesitate to be sure about themselves or about others. Supreme sacrifice, martyrdom, has, so far, been the only sure sign of the Bahai.

According to that test, there have been some 20,000 Bahais in different parts of the world, men and women who have braved death for this broad conviction.

Such was the note sounded at the recent Bahai convention held at the Auditorium hotel. Pilgrims from the Far East and the Far West made their way to Chicago to confer upon and study the teachings of Abdul Baha, the famous Persian philosopher, who interpreted the teachings of Baha 'Ullah. These teachings are of an all-emcompassing unity—unity of mankind, unity of religion—the one in all, the all in one.

The Bahai faith is called the universal religion. Its adherents see in it the only means to universal peace and happiness.

Saturday evening the feast of the Riduan was observed at the hotel, this marking the day from the year 1852 when Baha 'Ullah first proclaimed the new faith and himself as its leader. That was the day, the 21st of April, when the enemies of Baha 'Ullah both laughed and wept; that was the day when the friends of Baha 'Ullah both laughed and wept. In the morning the enemies laughed and the friends wept; in the afternoon the friends laughed, the enemies wept. For on that day, the day his banishment from Bagdad was to commence, he came into his own, rising above his enemies and bringing courage to his followers.

He labored until 1892 when the work was taken up by Abdul Baha, who carried it on until last year, the time of his death. Today the center of the Bahai cause and the guardian of its unity is Shoghi Effendi, the grandson of Abdul Baha.

This year the message is brought to Bahais of America by Jenabi Fazel Mazandarani, celebrated philosopher of Teheran, Persia, and by Prof. M. R. Shirazi of Karachi university, India.

Monday night Louis Gregory of Washington spoke on the "Oneness of Mankind."

"Humanity," he declared, "is one in origin and one in destiny. A single human body is the collective center of all the universe, having in it every element known. The oneness of mankind in practical life requires superhuman force for its demonstration, one being driven to the conclusion that men cannot be united on this lower plane. The animal world in which we live is a world of greed, darkness and exploitation."

Concluding his address, he explained: "The nineteenth century was a period of time during which men shook off slavery the world over and began to enjoy the fruits of freedom; the twentieth century in which we are now living points to hope, happiness, higher aspirations and victory."

Bahais recognize nor deny no sects. Bahatism implies thoroughgoing unification, broad enough to include all sects, races, colors, nations and shades of opinion. Better than that, those who claim to be in the service are strong enough to exert that superhuman strength required for a practical working out of their theory of unity.