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Rúḥáníyyih Ruth Moffett

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A Pilgrimage to the Holy Land

May 17 — September 17, 1954

Part 1. BRIGHTENING HORIZONS OF ISRAEL

“Come ye unto {{p1}} the House of the Lord with praise and thanksgiving.” The House of the Lord — the Holy Land! The land made sacred by all the Prophets of God — Enoch, Abraham, Moses, Zoroaster, Jesus Christ, Muḥammad, The Báb and Bahá’u’lláh. The land where the Divine Spirit has been poured in greater abundance than on any other place on this planet! What a place to make a pilgrimage with joy and thanksgiving! How the heart yearns to go there. Such were the yearnings in the heart of one expectant pilgrim, Rúḥáníyyih Ruth Moffett as she waved fare-thee-well to her faithful friends, Coranne Willis and Ann Koplin, at the United Air Lines Airport in Chicago. They were up all night with her and helped in innumerable ways in preparation for this momentous pilgrimage to Haifa. The United Air Line plane left Chicago at 7:00 a.m., May 17, 1954 flying over a lovely patch work quilt of green fields fringed by Spring orchards in bloom, arriving at Idlewild airport in New York at 10:30 a.m. In the airport Cafe, Rúḥáníyyih had time for just a bowl of soup before being weighed in for the long Transatlantic oceanic journey. She felt lonesome to start on her first ocean flight with no one to see her off and wish her “God Speed”, but she held firmly to the hand of Bahá’u’lláh with the faith that He would guide her safely throughout the journey.

The Royal Sabena Belgium Air Line plane, standing in the midst of a bevy of world planes ready to take off to far distant parts of the world, moved and “seemed to feel the stir of life along her keel”; she quivered with expectancy as her motors raced for the take off. It was exciting to follow the coastline of New England over Boston, Maine, Halifax and Nova Scotia looking down on the many cities and villages, the crooked roads and the variegated fields of many colours and the immense green forests, lakes, and the many islands off the coasts. She did not know there were so many islands of all shapes and sizes along the East coastline, and mostly unpopulated. Newfoundland was veiled in masses of clouds as the plane flew high over it. The royal Sabena gave excellent

service making all the forty-five passengers as comfortable as possible for the long non-stop flight through the dark night crossing the endless ocean far below. It was thrilling to fly 19,000 — 20,000 ft. high at a speed of from 300 — 400 miles per hour over the abysmal depths below. A great curtain of clouds veiled Glasgow, Manchester, and London. A wire broke in the heating system, but the thoughtful stewardess tucked the passengers snugly in warm woollen blankets, until, after crossing the English Channel, it became a bit warmer. Dawn with its rose-gold tints above the clouds is an experience one can never forget, symbolic of the beauty and rose-garden sheen when one rises above the tests and trials of life.

At 10:30 a.m. on Tuesday, May 18, the Royal Sabena glided along the runway to the first stop in Brussels, Belgium, after the long transoceanic flight. There the same plane was reconditioned and flew over Europe, and Brindisi, the tip of the heel of Italy, over the Ionian and Mediterranean Seas, and arrived in Athens, where the plane was again reconditioned, and arrived at 10:30 p.m., May 18, 1954 at the airport at Jappa, Tel Aviv, Israel. This is the modern miracle, to travel thousands of miles from Chicago to Tel Aviv in only thirty nine hours!

As the Royal Sabena plane winged its way toward Israel, Rúháníyyih wondered how it would look in comparison with when she saw it before — a desert land filled with rocks, sand, thorny bushes and confusion, and where everyone seemed to be against his neighbor. As the approaching lights of the Holy Land again came into view, her heart was filled with joyful and reverential expectancy and she thought to the words of the song, “Israel — The Land of Promise Welcomes You”. {{p12}}

As she gazed meditatively at the approaching lights of the Holy Land, the panorama of history seemed to unroll before her mind: of how Palestine was peopled by cave dwellers in about 3500 B.C.; of how Abraham was led to this land, and God made a covenant with Him, “that in the seed of Abraham shall all the nations of the earth be blest”; of the Cananites, and later how Moses led the Israelites out of bondage, and for forty years in the wilderness, and Joshua led them to the Promised Land flowing with milk and honey; how the Jewish people built up the land but turned away from God to gods of their own making. Then Saul became the first king and established a civic kingdom, but he died. David became the king unifying the kingdom and calling them to return to God: and David died and was called to his fathers. Solomon, his son became King. He expanded the kingdom, and to this day, the glory and unity of his kingdom is still sung. But Solomon died and the tribes became divided. Then the Assyrians in 722 B.C., destroyed Damascus and Israel and took the tribes into captivity, and they became scattered. After the Bábylonian invasion in 586 B.C. the remaining tribes of Judah were taken into Bábylonia and scattered. Alexander the Great captured Palestine in 332 B.C. The coming of Jusus, the Christ, had a profound effect on the history of this land, which became a noted center of pilgrimages.

Under the Moslem dominion from 636 A.D. for four centuries, and the long

period of the Christian Crusades, one lasting 100 years, there was much destruction and a little progress. It was under the control of the Ottoman Turks from 1516 until the first World War, then it became a mandate of Great Britain, under the League of Nations. "The White Paper" gave the promise that the doors of Palestine would again open to her people. Many outbreaks of violence have occurred between the Jews and Arabs, which have caused this land to become one of the danger spots of the world. After World War II, the Jews began returning in large numbers, until today there are about 1,465,000 Jews, gathered from 75 countries, 125,000 Moslems, 40,000 Christians, and 16,000 Druzes in Israel.

On May 14, 1948, a most remarkable bloodless revolution occurred, when 4,000,000 Moslems fled and 1,000,000 Jews marched in and began tilling their ancestral soil, and a new nation was born. Today the blue and white flag with the star of Bethlehem flutters proudly over the world's youngest democracy — "a nation as eternally old as yesterday, as eternally young as tomorrow". Phoenix-like, from the ashes have risen again to build a new homeland, to develop the most stupendous, life-salvaging operation ever undertaken in the whole history of mankind, and to fulfil the promise of the Ages!

Early in the morning Rúḥáníyyih left the queer little hotel, near the airport, where one noticed strange sounds and smells, and where scarcely anyone could speak English, and took the bus to Tel Aviv. Here she obtained a seat in a taxi to Haifa, 65 miles away. Full of eager anticipation to be on Mt. Carmel, the mountain of God, she scanned its slopes and was thrilled to see the gleaming golden dome of the Shrine of the Báb, as it stood in all its beauty and majesty. Arriving at the Bahá'í Pilgrim House, she was surprised to find Allan and Mary Elston, pioneers from the United States to Uganda, Africa; also Lillian Morgan Richards from Turkey; and Clara Edge from Michigan; and others. Rúḥíyyih Khánum, the wife of the Guardian of the Bahá'í World Faith, was giving a luncheon in the home of 'Abdu'l-Bahá to return many social obligations to prominent people of Israel. Rúḥíyyih Khánum greeted Rúḥáníyyih warmly and said she had arrived just in time "to be one of the guests of honour". The Masters house was beautifully decorated with flowers, and many delicious foods were prepared and attractively arranged by Rúḥíyyih Khánum and Millie Collins, Hand of the Cause, who were both charming hostesses to the thirty-five interesting and distinguished guests. {{p3}}

Across the street from the master's house is the Western Pilgrim House, of unusual design, by the architect, Mason Remey. It is the present home of Mason Remey, President of the International Council; Leroy Ioas, Secretary for the Guardian and of the International Council; and his wife, Sylvia Ioas; Jessie Revell, Treasurer of the International Council; Ethel Revell, Secretary for Rúḥíyyih Khánum. also, it is the guest house for the flow of Western pilgrims from Europe and America. The room which Rúḥáníyyih occupied over-looked the colourful Bahá'í gardens across the street, and the home of our Guardian with the deep blue Mediterranean Sea in the background. She was the last pilgrim

of the season. The atmosphere of the Pilgrim House is difficult to describe as it is teeming with activities and intensity of interest.

Rúháníyyih was constantly amazed at the many changes which had taken place on Mount Carmel since she was there in 1927, when the Guardian was young, and when the Greatest Holy Leaf was living. Then there were barren rocks and thorny bushes, and only the beginnings of the nine terraced gardens, and the simple, unornamented, stone Shrine of the Báb, resting on the ninth terrace. Today, however, these gardens have been transformed into a fairyland of rare beauty. Even the city of Haifa, itself, seems to be pulsating with new life.

Haifa Calling!

The ancient town of Haifa lies on the southern horn of a magnificent bay, three miles deep and nine miles wide, just where the green promontory of Mount Carmel breaks the 200 mile inhospitable coastline and yellow sand dunes stretching northward from Port Sa'íd to Haifa and around the Bay to the ancient city of 'Akká, the Acre of the Crusades. A mile and a half long breakwater extrudes from Nasil-Kerim. Another breakwater one and a half miles long runs at right angles to the first one. This affords a sheltered haven for every class of vessel. The harbour does not overshadow the town but has been designed to be part of the landscape and fits with good proportion into the entire noble pattern. It is a monument to British engineering genius. It is in the heart of the world — bisecting it between east and west, north and south.

In the days of the Canaanites, Haifa was known as Shikmona, and later to the Jews as Hepha, or haven. Among the Medes, and Persians, and Phoenicians, it was found to be an important station on the highroads of nations. Nature has granted it advantages seldom found in other seaports of the world.

This same soil was hallowed by the footsteps of His Holiness, Jesus the Christ, and all the Prophets of God. It was in 1868, the Messenger of God, Bahá'u'lláh, was sent here as a life-prisoner in exile by the Persian and Turkish governments. Here He lived, suffered, and triumphed until His ascension in 1892, delivering to men His Message of World Unity and Peace, and pointing out the spiritual and practical means by which such consummation might be achieved. From the time this Exalted One arrived in 'Akká, the entire area began to change. The very atmosphere seemed charged with a pruer, more vibrant quality, so intimately related are the things of heaven and earth,, the temporal and the spiritual.

Today we are witnessing miraculous progress and the growing importance of Haifa, 'Akká, Mount Carmel, and this whole area. One of the main causes of prosperity is the gigantic pipe-line, 600 miles long, with oil from Mosul to the refineries of 'Akká, and Haifa, fulfilling the prophecy of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, that Haifa will be "The City of Lights — The City of the Future". "Ere long a railway will follow the pipe-line from Haifa to Baghdád and the great Euphrates Valley, forming a link between the Eastern and Western worlds, forged first, spiritually, by Bahá'u'lláh and His followers in exile. Haifa will become a great distribution

center for the world's merchandise," 'Abdu'l-Bahá said, "and a highway of the nations. {{p4}}

We shall ere the long hear of wool from Mosul; barley and grains from 'Iráq and Palestine; dates from Ankara; potash and phosphates from the Dead Sea; rice, skins, hides from Írán; and oranges from Jaffa. Many precious articles from India, the Orient, all passing through Haifa to the markest of the world. It will become one of the first emporiums of the world. The entire harbour from Haifa to 'Akká will be one path of illumination. Carmel itself will be submerged in a sea of light. A person standing on the summit of Mount Carmel and the passengers on the nearing ships will look upon the most majestic spectacle of the whole world." It is destined, increasingly, to become THE CITY OF THE GREAT KING!

MOUNT CARMEL — THE MOUNTAIN OF GOD

'Abdu'l-Bahá said, "The day will come when this mountain will be resplendent with light — lights from top to bottom. On one side of it there will be a hotel, a universal hotel. Its doors will be open to all the people of the world. Whoever comes will be a guest. On the other side of the mountain there will be a university in which all the higher sciences will be taught. On the other part of it there will be a home for incurables. In still another part there will be a home for orphans. All these will be administered with love." — B.M. Jan. 1934, Vol.24, No. 19.

"I forsee that this harbour (Haifa) will be full of vessels. And from here to the blessed Shrine (Bahjí) there will be wide avenues, on both sides of which there will be trees and gardens. On the surrounding land at Bahjí, similar institutions to those on Mount Carmel will be established. And from all these places the songs of praise and exultation will be raised to the Supreme Concourse." 'Abdu'l-Bahá — Mt. Carmel 1/4/20.

"The air here at Mount Carmel is fragrant and the earth is sweet.... I have breathed the air of many country places," 'Abdu'l-Bahá said, "and seen much natural scenery, but the air of this mountain is most wholesome, vitalizing, and its scenery is very entrancing. Purity of air, sublimity of panorama and beauty of landscape are united on Mount Carmel, presenting to the eye a noble and inspiring spectacle of nature; its panorama of sea and land is very unique, its sun is all-glorious, its moon all-beautiful, and its stars are all-sparkling."

One may have three pilgrimages to Mount Carmel in one. First, is Pilgrim of the Eye where one sees the Shrines and Archives, the beautiful gardens, the Bahá'í World center, The International Council and the Guardian of the Bahá'í World Faith. Everyone arriving attains this pilgrimage, if they have become a Bahá'í or not. The second is the Pilgrimage of the Mind, which gathers oceans of informative Knowledge of the developments of the Bahá'í world Faith, the Great Global Crusade, the changing conditions of the world, the answers to seemingly unanswerable problems, and upon request special instructions from

the Guardian relating either to one's community, or to the individual himself. The second Pilgrimage of the Mind, in addition to the Pilgrimage of the Eye, some attain. The third is the Pilgrimage of the Soul. This is the sea that tsurges in the heart, melting its joys and sorrows, its ecstasies and failings, its resolves and its and its discouragements that storm through his being. This third pilgrimage prepares the soul by prayerfully walking along the lovely gardens and red — tiled paths leading to the majestic Shrine of the Báb, and there to kneel at the Threshold of the Shrine of the gentle loving Báb, and before the sacred Shrine of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the Servant of God; and then, the greatest of all, to prostrate in the Blessed Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh. As one enters the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh, the very air seems to throb with the majesty of His Presence. {{p5}}

One realizes, more and more, the greatness of the station of the Holy Ones, and becomes conscious of Their Sacrifices for Humanity, and Their Mission in bringing forth a new creation. The third pilgrimage begins with the first meeting with the Guardian, when discouraging weakness and failings become transformed into strength and courage, and the heart becomes aflame with the desire to serve in the Cause of God, and enter the service of his Lord. This third pilgrimage, the Pilgrimage of the Soul, only the most sincere attain. We hope that all may achieve the fulfillment of this three-fold pilgrimage and recognize the great station of our Guardian!

Shoghi Effendi occupies a unique position in religious history never before known. Since becoming the Guardian, after the passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá in 1921, he has guided the world-wide Bahá'í Community Through the early phases of establishing the Great Bahá'í Administrative Order which is destined, ere long, to form the pattern of the New World Order of Bahá'u'lláh. The Universal House of Justice, destined to support this new World Order, as a twin pillar to the station of the Guardianship, is in the process of unfoldment. The function of Shoghi Effendi is to establish and nurse and guide, without precedent, the National Spiritual Assemblies of the Bahá'í world. The station of Guardianship is not a legislative institution, but he has had to guide and develop the basic principles of Bahá'í Administration for use throughout the Bahá'í World, which Bahá'u'lláh has stated is the guarantee of World peace.

The Writings of Shoghi Effendi are exceedingly important and every word is significant. They do not constitute Divine Revelation as do the writings of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá, nor are they holy in the way Their Writings are holy. However, the Bahá'í World recognizes that Shoghi Effendi received his divinely ordained, appointed and recorded station, as the Interpreter of Their Words. Thus his writings are truly inspired. Therefore, the writings of Shoghi Effendi in this Day become the clearest appointed-divinely-reflected-authority on this planet! The Guardian's writings are universal and specific, eternal and particular. Eternal, because they expound the basic spiritual principles which will forever guide mankind; particularly, because they are applicable to the present state of the world and the progress of the individual Bahá'í, and their

part in establishing the new World Order, “The Kingdom of God on Earth.” The writings of Shoghi Effendi are life lines for the present, and a source of unprecedented guidance to unborn generations!” Shoghi Effendi is the Guardian, not the Revealer of the message sent by God to lead mankind to the Promised Day of the Most Great Peace. He is, today, the pure channel of god’s Mercy fulfilling this mighty promise of Bahá’u’lláh. “This is the Day which shall not be followed by night.”

To the Bahá’í, our Guardian is like a ray of sunshine which brings to light whatever is latent on the film of each pilgrim’s heart; transforming fear into courage, discouragement into faith, weakness into strength, passivity into activity, and the way of life into servitude. To the Bahá’í world the Guardian is like an ocean — the home and refuge for all things that have life within it, but it is also a surging sea that casts out from its depths all dead things. The Guardian is like a giant comet, blazing across the sky, drawing into its orbit all matter which can receive the flame of his love and increase its brightness. Those who are not attracted by this magnetic power who are not drawn into the fiery path, may see this blazing ball of fire thunder by. They may try too late to enter therein, but the moment for the junction is past, leaving them in darkness!

INTERNATIONAL RECEPTION

It was on May 20, at 4:00 o’clock, on a lovely day that Rúhíyyih Khánúm and Millie Collins gave an International Reception in the Western Pilgrim house, and distinguished guests arrived from many parts of Israel, including the governor and his wife, the Mayor and his wife, two ambassadors, a number of Israeli officials, doctors, lawyers, musicians {{p6}} and merchants. The Pilgrim House had been beautifully arranged with tea and coffee appointments, flowers, and delicious dainties of all kinds. The pilgrims, all dressed up, assisted the hostesses in this most attractive, heartwarming reception to meet the interesting, friendly peoples of Israel. The sweetness of Rúhíyyih Khánúm, her tact, her grace, her ready laughter followed by her words of wisdom, her sincere unassuming manner, her purity of heart and her warm overflowing love for everyone, together make a beauty and majesty of spirit that captured all hearts. The reception was a brilliant success and long to be remembered in the annals of Israel.

ARCHIVES

So many sincere souls have yearned with a great longing in their hearts, “If only we had one precious hair from the head of Christ, that was part of His very being, or had an authentic word written by His Sacred Pen, but we have not, nor of any Prophet of the past.” Today the world is blessed by the locks of precious hair from the very being of Bahá’u’lláh, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, and the Báb, the thousands of material things used by Them, tested and proven to be authentic. Never in the history of mankind has there before been such bounty! “In the future,” ‘Abdu’l-Bahá said, “the kings of the earth will come with bare heads and feet to view the most precious relics upon this planet.” It is amazing how our Guardian

has gathered them from all over the world, built the archives for these treasured belongings, organized them, designed the cabinets, and artistically arranged the displays for all these sacred treasures!

Dr. Lotfallah Jakim most lovingly and reverently showed us the only photograph of Bahá'u'lláh and the miniatures of Him painted in His lifetime, hundreds of books, epistles and tablets written by His own Pen. His garments, head coverings, slippers, some articles used by the Báb, and hundreds used by 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Their prayer beads, books, combs, and most cherished of all, the white shirt in which the Báb was martyred on July 9, 1850, with the stains of his precious blood still upon it.

No words can describe the spirit that penetrates the soul as we view these sacred objects and the great significance of them began to penetrate our minds. The seven archives where these sacred belongings are preserved are the: 1. Shrine of the Báb Archives 2. Minor Archives in the Monumental Gardens 3. The Twin House of Abud in 'Akká 4. The Most Great Prison in 'Akká 5. The Garden of the Ridván 6. The House of Mazariah 7. The Mansion of Bahá'u'lláh in Bahjí

Thousands of years will pass before such precious bounty with the outpouring of such spirit into material things can again take place! We thank Bahá'u'lláh for the priceless privilege of being able to view these sacred objects in this Day.

THE HOLY SHRINE OF BAHÁ

How can one describe the ethereal, intangible, spiritual beauty that enters into the very soul of the pilgrim as he steps out of his shoes and kneels with head touching the floor and heart humbly bowing, at the Holy threshold, in the Shrine of the Blessed Beauty, and walks on the very soil, hallowed by His precious feet?

What a bounty from God to kneel in the very spot, and the Threshold in the Shrine of The Báb, where the Master went almost daily to kneel and chant. {{p7}}

What a blessing to kneel in the Shrine of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the Servant of god, in fervent prayer! It was like a benediction!

In the Shrines, the human spirit reaches up and by earnest prayer, touches the Divine Spirit in supplication, in praise, in gratitude, until it becomes so purified that the supplicant is lifted in spirit to communion with God. his soul, or human spirit, makes the brief contact with the Divine Spirit. From that moment on he is reborn and his life begins to change. It changes as to methods, motives; yes, everything! The more you turn to that Divine Spirit, touching it with your humble, sincere human spirit, the greater will be the results in your life. The more you turn away, or half turn, you will find your life full of frustrations!

In 'Akká, in the House of Abud, where Bahá'u'lláh and his family were imprisoned for seven years, the mind is awed by the many personal things used by both Bahá'u'lláh, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá. there, Dr. Lotfallah Hakím took us into

the simple wood-panelled bedroom used by Bahá'u'lláh during those years of darkness and sorrow and suffering. Lotfallah tells you that this is the room in which the Kitáb-i-Aqdas was revealed, your heart and breath almost cease, and a great wave of veneration and awe floods the soul. You remove your shoes and bow your head, and kneel before the divan, for this is holy ground! God creates law, The Prophet of God reveals that law — and the corner of this blessed room is where it streamed, gushed, and poured to unite mankind in a world civilization of unity and peace! This is the book which Bahá'u'lláh said is “The Breath of Life to all created things.”

The Most Great Book, the book of Laws for 500,000 years to come! The little human mind cannot grasp its significance, but the pure heart floods with reverence and awe, overpowering awe. In such a manner hath the Kitáb-i-Aqdas been revealed. “The Pen can not move at the Splendour of this Revelation.” Every place blessed by the presence of Bahá'u'lláh seemed charged with a sense of majesty, greatness, power and authority in a greater degree than any other place on earth.

The Guardian has written, “The writings of Bahá'u'lláh, during the years of His confinement in the Most Great Prison, surpass the outpourings of His Pen in either Adrianople or Baghdád...This unprecedented extension of the reigns of his writings, during His exile in that prison, must rank as one of the most vitalizing and fruitful stages in the entire evolution of His Faith!”

How grateful we are that the Guardian has organized, and clarifies, and evaluated these basic points. The Guardian is a strong rope to which we not only can, but must cling. At all times you feel the motion, action, speed, power of His presence, that seems to grow more powerful the longer you are with him, with an inner peace that means both tranquility and power. He is like a hurricane. The closer you are to the center or heart, the greater the security and peace; the farther from this focal center, the more violent the reactions. We must move with the power, not against it or even indifferent to it, else we will be shattered by the impact.

It is here in ‘Akká that the eye of the spirit could picture — “The beloved of our hearts walked here!” “The Blessed Beauty’s feet pressed this soil!” “The Beloved Servant of God knelt here!” Muḥammad foretold that all of them, the companions of The Báb, should be slain except One, Who would reach the plain of ‘Akká, the Banquet Hall of God.

THE WEIZMANN SCIENTIFIC INSTITUTE — (REHOVOT ISRAEL)

Next in importance to the Bahá'í World Center and the Shrines of other Faiths for Rúḥáníyyih was to visit the now famous Weizmann Scientific Institute. Started by Dr. Chaim Weizmann, the great scientist and first President of the new State of Israel, it is a remarkable educational institution doing research in the fields of: I. THE FIELD OF MATHEMATICS A. The theory of

helium 11 B. Problems of diffusion and separation of isotopes C. Development of a new type of geophone D. Gravimetric and seismic exploration of Israel II. THE FIELD OF OPTICS A. This includes atomic polarization of molecules. B. Study of the glucosides of citrus fruits, and their absorption spectra. III. THE FIELD OF ISOTOPE RESEARCH A. The study of chemical mechanism B. the study of physical mechanism IV. THE FIELD OF BIOPHYSICS A. The study of the biochemical properties of all the liquids of the body. V. THE FIELD OF POLYMER RESEARCH A. The study and development of plastics, etc. B. The mutual and interaction of polyelectrolytes and the study of their action with living tissues and soils C. Water-soluble polyelectrolytes VI. THE FIELD OF ORGANIC CHEMISTRY A. the study of the chemical and medical properties of plants of Israel. B. Survey and exploitation possibilities of local bituminous stone; research on the constituents of petrol products obtained by cracking.

- VII. THE FIELD OF BIOCHEMISTRY A. The study of acids B. The study of cell action and reaction C. The study of fermentation
- VIII. THE FIELD OF GENETICS (PLANT) A. The study of the castor bean species of industrial value for nylon production
- IX. THE FIELD OF MICROANALYSIS AND EXPERIMENTAL BIOLOGY A. The study of cancer, its causes and control B. Beginnings of human life

It is a marvelous institution, remarkably well equipped. Dr. Benjamin M. Bloch, General Director, took me to his office, (the only one he selected out of fifty or more people) gave me a lovely book and literature and said as I was leaving "I beg your pardon, but I wonder if you are a Christian or a Jew, you seem so different!" I replied, "Both and more; I am a Bahá'í!" His face lighted up. "Oh, are you? I would like to talk to you. Can you remain a little longer?" Then he asked many questions with great eagerness, and urged me to come again so that we could talk further of these great basic things.

The Guardian was happy to learn of the surprisingly warm response of Dr. Bloch, the General Director of the Weizmann Scientific Institute, to the spirit of our Bahá'í Faith.

JERUSALEM — THE LAND OF PROMISE

Jerusalem — The Golden! A tour to the Christian Shrines in Jerusalem and in Galilee is like a pilgrimage through the New Testament. Every place where Jesus the Christ walked is Holy Ground! It is thrilling to bend the knee in the Holy Sepulchre, to enter the caves on Mount Carmel, to tread the paths of the Mount of Beatitudes, Mt. Zion, the Mount of Transfiguration, The Mount of Olives, Cana and Nazareth, and to stand by the waters of Jordan where Jesus was Baptized of John... and John said, "But I have need to be baptized of Thee!" And Christ said, "Suffer it to be so now!" Then the Holy Spirit appeared in the form of a dove and said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

These scenes, and these hallowed by all the Prophets of God, make this truly the Holy Land.

Zechariah 8:22 foretells a great future for Jerusalem. “Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of Hosts (which means Bahá’u’lláh) in Jerusalem and to pray before the Lord.”... and ... Genesis 15:18... “And in the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram saying, “Unto Thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates.”

Today these prophetic statements of the Prophets of the past are being fulfilled, and Jerusalem is ... “The Land of Promise.”

THE COMMEMORATION OF THE ASCENSION OF BAHÁ’U’LLÁH IN BAHJÍ

Our beloved Guardian had invited Rúháníyyih to return to Haifa to commemorate the ascension of Bahá’u’lláh with the family in Bahjí. What a bounty to have two of the most important Bahá’í Feasts come during her pilgrimage — the Declaration of the Báb, May 23, and the Ascension of Bahá’u’lláh, May 28!

It was a hot, sultry day. At 5:00 P.M. the Guardian and many of the Bahá’í men from surrounding cities in Israel left by taxis for the all-night commemoration. At 9:00 p.m. the ladies of the household went to Bahjí, Rúháníyyih tucked in between Rúhíyyih Khánum and Millie Collins. As we approached Bahjí, the lights of the gardens, many just completed for the occasion, were turned on. It was a fairyland of light and beauty that almost took the breath away. Thirty-five Bahá’í women, mostly dressed in black, knelt in prayer, wept and chanted in the Ascension Chamber of Bahá’u’lláh. At midnight tea was served in the Pilgrim House in Bahjí, and saintly Rúhíyyih Khánum spoke about the life of Bahá’u’lláh and His passing, interspersed with readings and chanting. After midnight, circumambulating the gardens in prayer, all prayerfully entered the Shrine of Bahá’u’lláh; — the thirty-five women kneeling all night in the women’s alcove, and the fifty men kneeling in the garden room, in the Shrine, in prayer. The beloved Guardian chanted on his knees at the Holy Threshold the rest of the night, until first flickering gleams of rose-gold light of the rising sun began to appear, and the thrilling notes of the morning songs of the mocking-bird sympathy warbled forth heralding the dawn.

It was a never-to-be-forgotten, heavenly, soul-stirring experience to knee all night in the sacred Shrine of Bahá’u’lláh, with our souls soaring on the wings of prayer as our Guardian chanted in that Hallowed Spot! Another experience for which to be grateful throughout eternity!

“Come ye unto the House of the Lord with joy and thanksgiving” has entered our souls with a new and richer meaning and we go forth to spread the glad Tidings of the new Spiritual Splendour with radiant joy. {{p10}}

‘Abdu’l-Bahá said, “And from all these places the songs of praise and exultation will be raised to the Supreme Concurrence!”

STATE OF ISRAEL

[map of Israel]

THE GUARDIAN TO RUHANIYYIH RUTH MOFFETT

May 17, to June 1, 1954

The following {{p11}} are notes of table conversations given by the beloved Guardian in the presence of Rúhíyyih Khánum and the members of the International Council who heard them all. Most of these notes were given when Ruth Moffett was the only remaining pilgrim. The notes are not verbatim and not given in sequence, but were verified by Rúhíyyih Khánum, and members of the International Council at the table after the departure of the Guardian, and checked each night until midnight by Jessie Revell from her stenographic notes to be sure that the intent is correct, and expressed as accurately as possible, in the words of the beloved Guardian.

Rúhíyyih Khánum wrote that if the friends could realize the selfless devotion, the justice and loving forbearance of the Guardian, “They would love him with a consuming, weeping tenderness and devotion, as indeed so many of them do. He is so golden-hearted, so pure-hearted, that sometimes when I catch a glimpse of it I am stunned.” As was this Pilgrim!

Now that our beloved Guardian has gone to his great reward in the Abhá Kingdom, every word of his is more important and precious than ever, and should be so soul stirring that we rise and spread the great, glad message of Bahá’u’lláh “as one soul in many bodies.”

Our Guardian, Shoghi Effendi had, on her first visit, asked the Greatest Holy Leaf, the only daughter of Bahá’u’lláh, for the spiritual names of Ruth and Robert Moffett, She said “For Ruth, Rúháníyyih, which means ‘spiritual beauty’, and the name of Robert is Ḥabíbu’lláh, which means ‘beloved’. Then the Guardian said that it is good to use these spiritual names as much as possible as it puts that spirit out into the others.