

AHMAD SOHRAB AND THE NEW HISTORY SOCIETY

By the American Hands of the Cause

The American Hands of the Cause have been requested by the National Spiritual Assembly to compile data on the defection of Ahmad Sohrab and the formation of the New History Society and the Caravan, which it sponsors.

1. The Tablets of the Divine Plan were brought to America by Ahmad Sohrab at the Guardian's request and presented by Sohrab at the Annual Convention held in Hotel McAlpine, New York, in April 1919. Before the Convention the Bahá'í Temple Unity (later succeeded by the National Spiritual Assembly) published these Tablets in pamphlet form, introduced by Sohrab's personal remarks. Sohrab read these remarks at the Convention. When the Tablets of the Divine Plan were later reprinted, Sohrab's remarks were deleted.

2. Bahá'í News, November, 1927, published a statement by the National Spiritual Assembly that the Guardian had been requested to deal with the problem of reviewing the diary notes of Ahmad Sohrab. The Guardian explained that all notes not approved by the Master Himself (in writing) have only the status of personal impressions and not as direct quotations of the Master's words.

3. Bahá'í News, August, 1930, published a statement by the National Spiritual Assembly entitled The Case of Ahmad Sohrab and the New History Society. Summarized, the article stated that the New History Society was begun in New York early in 1929 by Sohrab, "one of its avowed purposes being to spread the Bahá'í teachings. Neither the local nor the National Assembly was consulted in the matter, and the meetings and activities of the New History Society have been maintained apart from the principles of consultation which today, under the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, form the basis of Bahá'í unity and the protection of the Cause."

"Both the local and National Assembly on several occasions attempted, through oral and written communications, to bring about full and frank consultation with the leaders of the New History Society, but without success.

"Under these conditions it becomes the obvious responsibility of the National Spiritual Assembly to inform the friends that activities conducted by Ahmad Sohrab through the New History Society are to be considered as entirely independent of the Cause, as outside the jurisdiction of the local and National Assembly, and hence in no wise entitled to the cooperation of Bahá'ís."

This statement also quoted from a letter written on behalf of the Guardian by his Secretary to the National Spiritual Assembly on May 30, 1930: "To accept the Cause without the administration is like accepting the teachings without acknowledging the divine station of Bahá'u'lláh. To be a Bahá'í is to accept the Cause in its entirety...." "The administration is the social order of Bahá'u'lláh."

Without it all the principles of the Cause will remain abortive. To take exception to this, therefore, is to take exception to the fabric that Bahá'u'lláh has prescribed, it is to disobey His law."

Later that same year, in November 1930, Bahá'í News, the National Assembly published a detailed supplementary statement, quoting passages from the Aqdas, from the Master's Will and Testament, and from the Guardian's letters published in Bahá'í Administration, followed by a reprint of the exchange of correspondence and cables with Mrs. Chanler, and with the Guardian, including the Guardian's cable to New York believers: "True unity can only be preserved by maintenance paramount position National Spiritual Assembly," and his cable approving the statement (referred to above) published in August, 1930, Bahá'í News. Further, in a letter from Haifa to the Yonkers Assembly, the Guardian pointed out the difference between the freedom defined by Bahá'u'lláh ("To have liberty is to observe My commandments") and that advocated by Sohrab ("The other kind of freedom which is in defiance of law He (Bahá'u'lláh) considers to be animal, and far from being of any good to man").

4. In November, 1941, the National Spiritual Assembly distributed a mimeographed statement concerning the New History Society entitled The Basis of the Bahá'í Community, which explained the purpose and Outcome of the lawsuit entered against the founders of the New History Society to prevent their misuse of the name "Bahá'í" on which the National Spiritual Assembly had obtained a trade mark patent. The court took the position that it was not authorized to decide religious questions.

The statement therefore stressed the spiritual validity of the teachings, the Will and Testament and the institution of the Guardianship, and pointed out that the New History Society was in direct disobedience to the Faith in claiming to be a "Bahá'í" organization. "These movements sponsored by deluded, self-seeking adventurers find themselves, sooner or later, enmeshed in the machinations of their authors, are buried in shame and sink eventually into complete oblivion." (Shoghi Effendi).

During the second World War the New History Society put forth an alleged passage from 'Abdu'l-Bahá which would justify citizens in refusing to obey their governments when drafted into the military forces. The National Spiritual Assembly was obliged to explain the true Bahá'í position, as set forth by the Guardian, to the federal authorities.

5. A letter dated June 1, 1952, written on behalf of the Guardian by the Assistant Secretary, informed the National Spiritual Assembly that Ahmad Sohrab had cabled the Israeli Minister of Religion to influence the court case brought by the Covenant-breakers, against the Guardian, and which resulted in complete vindication of the Guardian's control of the Bahá'í Shrines and properties. Sohrab's cable identified the Caravan with the Covenant-breakers and stated that the organization was not under the authority of Shoghi Effendi. In a letter dated May 25, 1941, the Guardian wrote through his Secretary that Sohrab "is no doubt the most subtle, resourceful and indefatigable enemy the Faith has had in America."

This summary is sufficient to make it perfectly clear that the New History Society and the Caravan have been maintained as instruments to destroy the unity of the Bahá'is and to create a false conception of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh. This is nothing else but Covenant-breaking, and the believers were therefore years ago warned to have no connection whatever with these societies nor with their founders and leaders.

The Bahá'í community derives its spiritual vitality from the Manifestation of God. To retain its relationship to the Manifestation, the community and the individual believers must shun Covenant-breakers even as the Master's Testament so strongly commands.

AMERICAN HANDS OF THE CAUSE

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