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Dear Pioneers:

The grief and shock that has overcome the whole Baha'i World, and many of its friends, must be, if anything, keener among you who stand in the vanguard of the army of Baha'u'llah... you who were and are so dear to the heart and so much in the thoughts of our Beloved Guardian. Our thoughts and prayers are with you at this time.

You have already received directly from the N.S.A. the announcement, cables and related details. The Chairman of your Committee was among those privileged to represent the Canadian friends at the funeral in London on Nov. 9th. You will want to know as many details as possible. Your Committee has, therefore, arranged to devote this issue of the Round Robin to Winifred Harvey's Report of her stay in London.

"I received the first warning after 10 p.m. Tuesday evening when the Secretary of the Eastview group phoned the news of the first cable, that the Guardian was desperately ill. At 11 p.m. that night all N.S.A. members from Vancouver to Montreal met by telephone to hear the later cables from Ruhiiyyih Khanum, to arrange to reply to these cables on behalf of the Canadian friends to notify the believers and the press as quickly as possible, and to plan for representation in London. As you know, Ruhiiyyih Khanum called Hands of the Cause,, ~~N.S.A.~~ N.S.A., and Auxiliary Board members (in so far as was possible) to attend the funeral. Lloyd Gardner, Chairman; Chairman; Allan Rayner, Vice Chairman; Peggy Rose Secretary; Rowland Estall, who is also an Auxiliary Board member; Hart Bowesfield, and myself represented the Canadian friends, Pioneers, Gale and Janie Janie Bond were already in London en route to Haifa in December, and former Pioneer to Newfoundland, Doris Skinner, was there from Europe."

"The Canadian representation was fortunate in obtaining reservations for Thursday evening. We arrived in London Friday afternoon, and reached the Normandie Hotel, late and tired, about 3 p.m. The Normandie, where reservations had been made for representatives from many countries, is less than five minutes' walk from the British Hazira. The Hands, who were in session much of the time, were mainly at the nearby Hyde Park Hotel."

"After checking in and cleaning up, we went down to the Rotunda for afternoon tea (we had not eaten since early morning breakfast) and to meet other friends to learn more details. The N.S.A. at this point had no more information than was in the cables. We learned that the Guardian and Ruhiiyyih Khanum had been in London on business for a few days. Someone said (this may be incorrect) that the Guardian was doing some work in connection with the International Archives. He was stricken with Asian 'Flu, but was recovering. Apparently this added to the long years of strenuous and unremitting labor in the service of our Faith, was too much. When Ruhiiyyih Khanum went to his room in the morning she found that he had passed away in his sleep of a heart attack."

"You must pray for Ruhiiyyih Khanum. Her grief and her loss is not only of her beloved Guardian but also of her no less beloved husband. During this trying time she has heroically set aside her personal grief to fulfill her tremendous responsibilities as a Hand of the Cause, to comfort and sustain her fellow-believers, to draw the bonds closer among them, and to undertake the planning of the many tasks necessary for the funeral and for the protection of the Cause."

"We learned that the Hands were gathered from all over the world. The responsibility of leadership lies with them for the present and they were almost continually in session. In all, 18 of the 27 Hands arrived in time for the funeral and at least two, including Joh Roberts, came later. They go on to Haifa where they convene on Wednesday, I think, to fulfill the obligation laid on them by 'Abdu'l-Baha in the Will and Testament. They will ratify the Guardian's will and announce the successor."

"We met British, European, African and Persian representatives and friends

many of whom some of you will know. Eight members of the United States N.S.A. were there - all but Horace Holley, who was just leaving Hospital, but who will be in Haifa at the Conference of the Hands. British, German, African and other NSA's were represented. So far as we could discover, some 14 N.S.A.'s and 30 countries were able to send representatives in time for the funeral. Except for lack of travel time, there would have been many more. In addition to the Hands and the representatives, the friends in London were invited. The British NSA (which rose nobly to the many tasks devolving upon it) called all British believers who could manage it to London. In addition, many friends from Europe came also. In all, there were about 600 gathered that sad Saturday."

"On Friday evening, (Nov.8) many of the friends gathered at the Hazira on the invitation of the British NSA for a memorial service. Prayers were chanted or read as well as suitable selections from the Will and Testament and from the Dispensation. Friends from many countries participated. It was a deeply moving service and most impressive as symbolizing the sharing of this grief and loss by the whole world. Afterwards simple refreshments were served and friends some of whom had been separated by pioneer and other services for years, and others who knew each other by Baha'i correspondence, exchanged greetings. There was much talk of the Guardian, of Crusade goals and friends associated with them, of the event for which we were gathered, but none of the feelings behind-- for there were no words for these."

"The following morning at 10 a.m. the general body of the friends gathered in one part of the ~~Hira~~Hazira and the Hands and representatives in another room. Peggy Ross and I stood in a corner of this room watching these great souls gather. We were impressed and deeply touched to realize that we, thanks to the choice of the Canadian friends, whatever its wisdom, stood among the great ones of our generation. People who are newspaper headlines now will be forgotten, but among us were those who will be remembered throughout the ages! Mr. Samandari, aged and frail, Mason Remy also a very old and grief-stricken man, Mr. Khadem, called from a conference in Luxembourg and ill, Leroy Ioas, who left Haifa at the last possible moment because he was needed there to carry on at the Center and to protect the Holy Places from possible harm from the mischief makers who have always taken heart to destroy at such times of crisis. John Ferraby who was buddy night and day and who had shared the watch since the Guardian's passing. And the others - Hands, MSA and Auxiliary Board members. So they gathered and embraced and comforted each other, That a strong rugged-faced, middle-aged man should weep like a child at this time was neither embarrassing nor unfitting. Our hearts went out to Him."

"Meanwhile, on the street in front of the Hazira, friends were laying their floral offerings - masses of cysanthemums, roses, carnations, and many other flowers. Some fifty taxi's were lining up to take the friends without cars to the chapel. At 10:30 the Hands were called to enter the first cars after Ruhiiyyih Khanum with Millie Collins and perhaps some others. Then the representatives followed, after which the remaining friends filled the cars. The cars at the head of the cortege carried masses of flowers on the tops. Peggy and I were with three members of the German NSA and an Egyptian member of the Central and East Africa NSA. Most of the other Canadians were in the car behind. As the cars filled they moved up the street and into Hyde Park. It took about an hour for the cortege to form completely, the cars gradually moving ahead in the Park as the line formed behind."

"Finally the long sad procession began to make its way through the streets of London to the Chapel in the Great Northern London Cemetery. The first cars arrived on this sunny morning just before noon. The friends gathered at either side of the Chapel door. Many wept as the bearers removed the simple bronze casket, covered with red and white roses, and lillies of the valley, from the hearse, waited for Ruhiiyyih Khanum supported by aged and wonderful Millie Collins followed with the other Hands, then the representatives and the friends."

"The casket was placed on a stand in the center of the platform at the top of the chapel. A rich green velvet gold edged rug covered the floor beneath. Behind was a recess filled with great masses of cysanthemums shading from white at the top through light to deep red at the bottom. On either

side were banks of flowers and along a moulding surrounding the chapel were laid mauve chrysanthemums. Ruhiiyyih Khanum sat to the right, next the auditorium, and the other Hands seated in rows on either side of the platform. Behind Ruhiiyyih Khanum was a reading desk from which the service was read and chanted. The chapel was full, with friends standing in the aisle and along the back."

It was 12 noon. There was silence for a few moments. Then the friends stood while Mr. A.Q. Faizl, Hand of the Cause, chanted the beautiful prayer for the dead. Miss Betty Reed of the British N.S.A. read Nos. 32 and 11 of the Hidden Words, and Gleanings p. 345 beginning 'Death proffereth' to 'of all worlds'. She was followed by Miss Elsie Austin, American Negro lawyer, member of the NSA of North and West Africa, who read from Gleanings, p.341, 'All praise be...Almighty' and 'The fierce gales...is based'. Next Mr. Abed Shahrzacheh Nainiri from Britain I think, chanted the Arabic Hidden Words, 12, 14, 32. Mr. Borrah Kavelin of the United States NSA read Prayers and Meditations 145 p. 234. William Sears, Hand of the Cause and Member of the NSA of South and West Africa, read Prayers and Meditations 92, p. 155. Finally Mr. Ian Semple read the first two paragraphs of the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Baha. I cannot tell you of the spirit that pervaded the simple service."

"The friends stood and opened a passage through the aisle. The bearers came forward and carried the casket, followed by Ruhiiyyih Khanum, the Hands, the representatives, and the other friends down the aisle and along gravel walks to a corner plot in the midst of accacia, pine and other large trees. Tiny, newly planted cypress had been placed at each corner of the plot. At a short distance, to leave room for the friends, were piled dozens of floral offerings."

"The Casket was set down at the head of the grave. The covering of red roses centered with white roses and lillies of the valley, that bore the card, as far as I could see, 'From Ruhiiyyih and your loved ones all over the world whose hearts are stricken' was set aside. Then Ruhiiyyih Khanum, in her great love and understanding, delayed the service to permit the friends who wished, to make a last brief farewell. At this moment, clouds which had been hanging about the November sky suddenly overcast the whole with a dark grey pall and there was a brief sprinkle of cold rain, as though nature itself shed its tears with us. Then the skies cleared again as friend after friend moved forward to bow, kneel or prostrate themselves at the head of the casket. Some were overcome and had to be helped away. Twice Ruhiiyyih Khanum took in her arms and comforted an overwhelmed woman. For perhaps an hour the friends moved past, the Haifa Hands and Ruhiiyyih Khanum last of all. Finally, reluctantly, it was necessary to complete the last rites, to consign our beloved to his resting place. The casket with its simple inscription:

Shoghi Effendi Rabbani
First Guardian of the
Baha'i Faith
March .., 1896 - November 4, 1957
London, England.

was covered with a rich blue printed silk cloth that had been impregnated with attar of roses. The great velvet rug on which the casket stood in the chapel was laid over it and perhaps others. Attar of roses was sprinkled over it and in the open grave. Then the remains of our beloved Guardian were lowered into the flower and greenery-lined grave while Mr. Ali Makkjavani chanted a Persian prayer composed by the Guardian, and lastly, Mr. Hassan Balyuzi recited in English the beautiful "Glory be to Thee, O God, for Thy Manifestation of love to mankind!...Verily, in Thee do we find comfort and strength." (Red Prayer Book, No. 57.)

"The friends still lingered as though they could not bear to leave. Gradually they drifted off to the waiting taxi's. The Hands and the representatives entered their cars and drove about in the area while the grave was being filled and sealed. Then at Ruhiiyyih Khanum's request they returned to

witness the sealing of the grave. We gathered in the chapel and when all had arrived Ruhiiyyih Khanum led the way to the graveside where the masons were just completing the cementing of a concrete slab over the grave. The floral mat that had covered the casket lay across the corner of the slab. It was sunny, but very cold now."

"This was very informal. We assembled in a group at the foot of the grave and Ruhiiyyih Khanum asked friends to read short prayers in languages that had not been used in the services, a token of all countries. I do not remember all, but there were prayers in Dutch, French, German, English for the Australian believers, an African native language, Arabic for Pakistan and others. Then the Hands of the Cause, including Ruhuyyih Khanum, scattered over the grave fresh flowers that had been brought from the Shrine, Ridvan and Masraih gardens in the Holy Land. The representatives scattered the remaining flowers. Then spontaneously, the friends carried from where they were laid, the dozens of floral tokens and spread them around the grave. I saw our NSA Chairman, Lloyd Gardner, lovingly carrying to the graveside the tribute of red roses and carnations and bronze crysanthemums from the Canadian Community. When we were finished, it was a glory of color."

"So we returned late in the afternoon, still not fully believing that our beloved Guardian was no longer with us! Even being there, we could not realize this shattering tragedy that had overtaken us."

"That evening the British NSA invited the friends to the Hzira for another brief memorial service to represent yet other languages and peoples. We were delayed at dinner and a little late arriving. We could not get in. Every room, stairway, hallways, and overflowing into the street, the place was full of the friends. People exchanged greetings and farewells. We did not stay, but we did meet several friends we knew. We went down for awhile and returned to find John Roberts had arrived about 9 p.m.. He was in session with the Hands until midnight when he joined us for an hour or so. We exchanged news of Africa and Canada. Later Paul Haney came in to tell us - the Canadian NSA members, that Ruhiiyyih Khanum wished to meet with us the following afternoon."

"The next morning Peggy and I were up in good time. We wanted to go out to the Cemetery again, as some did, but she had some NSA work, and I wanted to make a start on this report to you, so we stayed in our room for the morning. At noon John Roberts joined us. He had been out to the Cemetery with Ruhiiyyih Khanum and several others. He said that she had talked a great deal about the Guardian. Among other things, she spoke of how fitting it was that he should lie in England. He had loved the British Baha'is. They are great servants of our Faith. She said 65 percent of the British Community had pioneered - a record no other community could equal. She spoke of the Guardian spending his last afternoon completing some work for the International Conference..., and so on, little, touching, intimate stories."

"After lunch we went over to the Hazira. The Canadian representatives and John, who elected to be a Canadian for the purpose, were shown into the Library, a small room on the ground floor, to wait until Ruhiiyyih Khanum was ready for us. She was in the NSA meeting room on the fifth floor where it was quieter. While we waited, a pioneer from the Orknays came in for a few minutes, then Canon Townsend's son (his daughter, Una, is moving to Vancouver next week), then Leroy Ioas's daughter, now pioneering in Paris. We were alone for a few minutes when Mrs. Ferraby came to ask if Mr. Samandari could sit with us - every other place was filled. You recall he is the Hand that met Bahha'u'llah. Of course he came with a couple of Persian men, one of whom knew some English. He thought he needed a better translator and left to get - imagine - the Persian girl I met in Haifa (whom I told you of, who had planned to pioneer in London but the Guardian suggested Edinburgh). She is not 21 yet but she told me that since she arrived they achieved their assembly

and a strong one at that. We asked Mr. Samanlari if he had any message for Canada. He said he had longed to go to Canada, Ruhiyih Khanum's home but had been x unable to do so when he was in the States in 1953. He regretted that such a sad occasion brought us together and hoped to meet us again under happier circumstances. He said that 'Abdu'l-Baha had particularly loved the Canadians from the time of the first Bahais here, and so had the Guardian. He spoke of our work. Then we were interrupted by a messenger to say that Ruhiyih Khanum was ready for us."

"The building was full - stairways, and hallways, listening to the words of the Hands who were addressing the meeting of the friends. You could hear a pin drop, so silent and intent was this vast assemblage in which there were several children. We went up a back stairway to the NSA room, where Ruhiyih Khanum and Millie Collins were, both looking inexpressibly tired, awaiting us. They greeted us each. I noticed that Ruhiyih Khanum remembered everyone, and asked to be introduced to Hart, who was not on the Assembly when she was here in 1953. We spent perhaps 20 minutes with her while other NSA representatives lined up outside, by continent, to meet her later. We talked informally of several things - some NSA business.

Ruhiyyih Khanum's regret was that we could not meet every individual but hoped the representatives would stand in place of them. She spoke of the need to draw together to protect the Faith, to fulfill our tasks. She said some 300 pilgrims, some of them already enroute, had to be disappointed. She said, "You have lost your father, the Assemblies must now be the mother to the friends," She said the doctor had ordered a day or so of rest and then she would return to the Center. She was warm, sympathetic, and practical and heroic in her complete concern for the rest of us. It was a beautiful and moving closing to our session."

"It was impossible to get close enough to hear the Hands in the Auditorium, so we went quietly down the back stairs and wa away. I returned to the Hotel to check out and catch my plane back to Ottawa."

Salutation and praise, blessing and glory rest upon that primal branch of the Divine and Sacred Lote-Tree, grown out, blest, tender, verdant and flourishing from the Twin Holy Trees, the most wondrous, unique and priceless Pearl that doth gleam from out the twin surging seas... as he is the sign of God, the chosen branch, the guardian of the Cause of God." (Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Baha, Baha'i World Faith, p.438)

NEW TERRITORIES COMMITTEE.

(Added by E. V. H. - From Haifa Notes of Mrs. Gayle Woolson, Feb. 16-25, 1956. "One of the Persian Pilgrims present at Haifa when I was, told me that one of the Persian men in their group had asked the Guardian about his descendants, about a son, and the Guardian answered: 'Everything that is written in the Will and Testament will be fulfilled. The Baha'is must not be anxious about this.'")

Copied by E. V. H. - please keep and share with as many as possible in the months or years following.