



SHAMSI NAVIDI

IN LOVING MEMORY

21 April 1929 – 14 December 2006

MEMORIAL SERVICE, SUNDAY 4 FEBRUARY 2007, ROYAL GARDEN HOTEL, KENSINGTON

MESSAGES

Her innumerable services, performed with a vibrancy and graciousness that endeared her to all who met her, have left a sterling legacy for future generations.

THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE

Shamsi's outstanding qualities—her nobility of character, integrity, generosity, loving-kindness—endeared her to countless souls. In all her services and to all occasions of her life, Shamsi brought her inimitable charm and grace, her radiance of spirit and her unwavering faith...

NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE BAHÁ'IS OF THE UNITED KINGDOM

The members of her bereaved family should be confident that her radiant soul is now shining with great splendour in the realms beyond. The cloud of her body, now dissipated, enables the light of her luminous spirit to shed its lustre upon her loved ones, unobscured by any obstacle, with unprecedented brightness and glory.

THE NAKHJAVANIS

*Shamsi's passing has affected us beyond measure.
We marvel at her courage and example of fortitude right to the very end.*

RAMIN AND FARANEH KHADEM, LONDON

Shamsi truly manifested those splendid qualities of being at ease with all who were in her company and this very special trait endeared her to everyone.

SOHRAB AND LINDA YOUSSEFIAN, ITALY

This world will indeed be a poorer place without her. We are blessed to have known her.

BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY OF ROMANIA

*She mingled with high and low alike with the same ease and grace.
It is very difficult to gauge the depth and expanse of the vacuum left by her departure.*

BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY OF MAURITIUS

*She radiated a peace that came from within.
It is this peace, manifested amongst other things in a most beautiful smile, that conveyed a closeness to God and a personal relationship with the Divine.*

DR ROSEMARY KEENAN, DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, CATHOLIC CHILDREN'S SOCIETY (WESTMINSTER)

*"The flame of Love is not extinguished after death.
The lamp is taken from this house to that."
She had many admirers and friends in India and has set a worthy example
for generations to come.*

BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY OF INDIA

*Shamsi was such an outstanding teacher.
She was indeed a distinguished person and a good friend.*

IRAJ AND NAZ PAKZAD, CAMEROON

*I loved her well... I enjoyed her conversation,
her company and her exquisite Persian cooking enormously.*

AMBASSADOR SERGIU CELAC, ATHENS

A remarkable life of faith, certitude, love, service, and sacrifice. The fruits of the tree of her life were "exquisite, highly desired, and dearly cherished." Among them "... upright character, virtuous deeds, and goodly utterance."

HOSSAIN AND MICHELE DANESH, CANADA

Shamsi was very special and has taken her special place in the kingdom of lights.

SARAH RENE, FORMER FIRST LADY OF THE SEYCHELLES

SHAMSI NAVIDI was a devoted mother and grandmother, a lecturer and teacher deeply committed to the development of human potential, and a passionate advocate of numerous social causes, including the environment, inter-religious understanding and women's rights. She was greatly loved by the diplomatic communities in London and Mauritius, and by the worldwide Bahá'í community. Renowned for her wonderful hospitality wherever she lived, her home was always open to all—regardless of colour, creed or class.

Shamsi was born in Tehran, Iran, into a noble and distinguished family. Her father was Mirza Bagher Jalil of Malayer, Iran, and her paternal grandfather, Hadi Karbelai, was a prominent personage in the Malayer region

who had become a Bahá'í in the late nineteenth century. Because of the intense persecution of the Bahá'ís in Iran, he soon emigrated to Ishghabad, Russia. He received a number of letters from the faith's Prophet-Founder, Bahá'u'lláh and His son 'Abdu'l-Bahá, praising him for his steadfastness in the face of persecution.

Shamsi's noble grandmother was the daughter of the eminent and powerful Imam Jume'h and her maternal grandfather was Sultan Mohamad Amzerjerdi. When Mírzá Abu'l-Fadl, the renowned court and Bahá'í scholar visited the province of Hamadan, he was arrested and confined to the custody of Shamsi's grandfather. This was self-defeating as the Sultan in turn became the first Bahá'í in Amzajerdi.



As a young woman, Shamsi enjoyed sports such as skiing and was the first woman tennis champion in Tehran. Following her marriage to the highly successful government lawyer, Dr. Aziz Navidi, she honed her skills as a hostess to influential people and officials at their house on the prestigious Villa Avenue.

In 1954, after Aziz obtained his doctorate at the Sorbonne, Paris, in International Law, the family moved to Monte Carlo, where he practiced as an international lawyer. During their stay, they built lasting friendships with officials at the palace of Prince Rainier.

From 1968 to 1977, the Navidis lived in Mauritius where Aziz represented the Iranian petro-chemical industry for the Indian Ocean region, and Shamsi became a well-loved figure, giving lectures in village halls, schools and universities on her favourite subject—the oneness of religion and the unity of the human race. Her hospitality extended across barriers—from villagers to diplomatic circles. On one occasion, she was asked to organise an intercontinental Rotary conference, despite the fact that Rotary was exclusive to men in Mauritius.



After moving to London, and following Aziz's death in 1987, Shamsi continued to offer her renowned hospitality and spectacular Persian cuisine to all who entered her elegant Belgravia home. She travelled widely addressing conferences on the theme of the spiritual dimension of human nature at gatherings in eastern Europe and south-east Asia, establishing notable friendships with government officials along the way, and encouraging people from all walks of life to celebrate the oneness and diversity of religion and mankind.

Her wisdom, graciousness, compassionate nature, loving hospitality and radiant generosity endeared her to all whose path she crossed. She lived a life true to her Bahá'í beliefs in deeds, not just in words.

With her passing we have lost one of the most distinguished ambassadors for interfaith understanding and with her support for WWF, a champion of environmental causes.

WELCOME

Miss Alexandra Walker and Miss Stephanie Walker, Granddaughters of Shamsi Navidi

Message from the Universal House of Justice, international governing body of the Bahá'í Faith

"We were grieved to learn of the passing of the greatly loved, stalwart handmaiden of Bahá'u'lláh, Shamsi Navidi... She will be especially remembered... as an Ambassador of the Cause... Her innumerable services, performed with a vibrancy and graciousness that endeared her to all who met her, have left a sterling legacy for future generations... Kindly convey to her beloved daughters, Vida and Guilda, their families and her many friends our condolences and the assurance of our ardent prayers at the Sacred Threshold for the progress of her luminous soul throughout the worlds of God."

PRAYERS AND READINGS FROM THE BAHÁ'Í SACRED WRITINGS

Prayer in Arabic

O THOU KIND LORD! This dearly cherished maidservant was attracted to Thee, and through reflection and discernment longed to attain Thy presence and enter Thy realms. With tearful eyes she fixed her gaze on the Kingdom of Mysteries. Many a night she spent in deep communion with Thee, and many a day she lived in intimate remembrance of Thee. At every morn she was mindful of Thee and at every eve she centred her thoughts upon Thee. Like unto a singing nightingale she chanted Thy sacred verses, and like unto a mirror she sought to reflect Thy light. O Thou Forgiver of sins! Open Thou the way for this awakened soul to enter Thy kingdom, and enable this bird, trained

by Thy hand to soar in the eternal rose garden. She is afire with longing to draw nigh unto Thee; enable her to attain Thy presence. She is distraught and distressed in separation from Thee; cause her to be admitted into Thy Heavenly Mansion. O Lord! We are sinners, but Thou art the Forgiver. We are submerged in the ocean of shortcomings, but Thou art the Pardoner, the Kind. Forgive our sins and bless us with Thine abundant grace. Grant us the privilege of beholding Thy Countenance, and give us the chalice of joy and bliss. We are drowned in a sea of inequities, and Thou art the Lord of infinite mercy. Thou art the Giver, the Glorious, the Eternal, the Bounteous; and Thou art the All-Gracious, the All-Merciful, the Omnipotent, He Who is the Bestower of gifts and the Forgiver of sins. Verily, Thou art He to Whom we turn for the remission of our failings, He Who is the Lord of lords.

— 'Abdu'l-Bahá

O SON OF MAN! Thou art my dominion and my dominion perisheth not. Wherefore fearest thou thy perishing? Thou art my light and my light shall never be extinguished. Why dost thou dread extinction? Thou art my glory and my glory fadeth not, thou art my robe and my robe shall never be outworn. Abide then in thy love for me, that thou mayest find me in the realm of glory.

— Babá'u'lláh

To consider that after the death of the body the spirit perishes, is like imagining that a bird in a cage will be destroyed if the cage is broken, though the bird has nothing to fear from the destruction of the cage. Our body is like the cage, and the spirit is like the bird ... If the cage becomes broken, the bird will continue and exist: its feelings will be even more powerful, its perceptions greater, and its happiness



increased... The mysteries of which man is heedless in this earthly world, those will he discover in the heavenly world, and there will he be informed of the secret of truth; how much more will he recognize or discover persons with whom he hath been associated. Undoubtedly, the holy souls who find a pure eye and are favoured with insight will, in the kingdom of lights, be acquainted with all mysteries, and will seek the bounty of witnessing the reality of every great soul. Even they will manifestly behold the Beauty of God in that world. Likewise will they find all the friends of God, both those of the former and recent times, present in the heavenly assemblage.

— 'Abdu'l-Bahá

THOU HAST ASKED ME concerning the nature of the soul. Know, verily, that the soul is a sign of God, a heavenly gem whose reality the most learned of men hath failed to grasp, and whose mystery no mind, however acute, can ever hope to unravel. It is the first among all created things to declare

the excellence of its Creator, the first to recognise His glory, to cleave to His truth, and to bow down in adoration before Him. If it be faithful to God, it will reflect His light, and will, eventually, return unto Him. If it fails, however, in its allegiance to its Creator, it will become a victim to self and passion, and will, in the end, sink in their depths.

— *Bahá'u'lláh*

MUSIC

A FRIEND ASKED: "How should one look forward to death?" 'Abdu'l-Bahá answered: "How does one look forward to the goal of any journey? With hope and with expectation. It is even so with the end of this earthly journey. In the next world, man will find himself freed from many of the disabilities under which he now suffers. Those who have passed on through death, have a sphere of their own. It is not removed from ours; their work, the work of the Kingdom, is ours; but it is sanctified from what we call 'time and place.' Time with us is measured by the sun. When there is no more sunrise, and no more sunset, that kind of time does not exist for man. Those who have ascended have different attributes from those who are still on earth, yet there is no real separation. In prayer there is a mingling of station, a mingling of condition. Pray for them as they pray for you!"

— 'Abdu'l-Bahá

SINCERE PRAYER always has its effect, and it has a great influence in the other world. We are never cut off from those who are there. The real and genuine influence is not in this world but in that other. It is a law of God's creation that the weak should lean upon the strong. Those to whom you turn may be mediators of God's power to you, even as when on earth. But it is the One Holy Spirit that strengthens all men.

— 'Abdu'l-Bahá

O MY SERVANTS! Sorrow not if, in these days and on this earthly plane, things contrary to your wishes have been ordained and manifested by God, for days of blissful joy, of heavenly delight, are assuredly in store for you. Worlds, holy and spiritually glorious, will be unveiled to your eyes. You are destined by Him, in this world and hereafter, to partake of their benefits, to share in their joys, and to obtain a portion of their sustaining grace. To each and every one of them you will, no doubt, attain.

– *Babá'u'lláh*

MUSIC

AUDIO-VISUAL PRESENTATION

TRIBUTES

Mr Graham Walker

Sir Sigmund Sternberg

Lady Levy

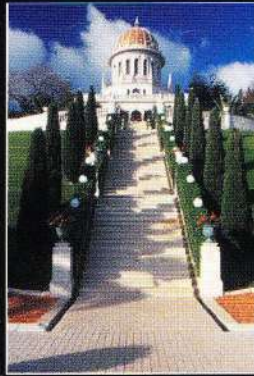
Lord St John of Bletso

Mrs Latifa Kosta

O MY GOD! O my God! Verily Thy servant, humble before the majesty of Thy divine supremacy, lowly at the door of Thy oneness, hath believed in Thee and in Thy verses, hath testified to Thy word, hath been enkindled with the fire of Thy love, hath been immersed in the depths of the ocean of Thy knowledge, hath been attracted by Thy breezes, hath relied upon Thee, hath turned his face to Thee, hath offered his supplications to Thee, and hath been assured of Thy pardon and forgiveness. He hath abandoned this mortal life and hath flown to the kingdom of immortality, yearning for the favour of meeting Thee. O Lord, glorify his station, shelter him under the pavilion of Thy supreme mercy, cause him to enter Thy glorious paradise, and perpetuate his existence in Thine exalted rose garden, that he may plunge into the sea of light in the world of mysteries. Verily, Thou art the Generous, the Powerful, the Forgiver and the Bestower.

– *'Abdu'l-Babá*





THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH originated in Persia in 1844. It was founded by Bahá'u'lláh, whom Bahá'ís regard as one of the great Divine Teachers that periodically appear in the world to guide humanity towards peace and unity. These Teachers include Christ, the Buddha, Mohammad, Zoroaster, Krishna and Moses, as well as those

whose names are forgotten and whose teachings have survived in sayings and parables. Bahá'ís believe that no race or age of humanity has been deprived of God's guidance, and that today, more than ever before, this guidance is a vital source of comfort and inspiration in building a harmonious and united international society.

The key principles of Bahá'u'lláh's teachings are:

That there is one God.

That there is an underlying unity of purpose in all religions.

That national and racial prejudices should be abolished.

That men and women are equal.

*That all people should receive an education,
and realise their true potential.*

That science and religion should strive towards harmony.

*That extremes of wealth and
poverty should be brought to an end.*

*That all peoples should be
enabled to learn an international language.*

*That spiritual solutions
can resolve social and economic problems.*

Today there are more than 5 million Bahá'ís around the world, working to put these principles into action. Their efforts include the establishment of socio-economic projects such as literacy and professional training in poor rural regions of the world, and the establishment of schools, universities and radio stations to improve access to education in remote or impoverished parts of the world.