

THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE

Riḍván 1982

To the Bahá'ís of the World

Dearly loved Friends,

Triumphs of inestimable portent for the unfoldment of the Cause of God, many of them resulting directly from the steadfast heroism of the beloved Persians in face of the savage persecutions meted out to them, have characterized the year just ending. The effect of these developments is to offer such golden opportunities for teaching and further proclamation as can only lead, if vigorously and enthusiastically seized, to large-scale conversion and an increasing prestige.

Heartwarming progress in the construction of the Indian and Western Samoan Mashriqu'l-Adhkárs, the opening of the second Bahá'í radio station of Latin America in Peru, the establishment of the European office of the Bahá'í International Community in Geneva, steady advances in the second phase of the Seven Year Plan, encouraging expansion of the systematized Bahá'í education of children, sacrifice and generous outpouring of funds from a growing number of friends, all testify to the abundant confirmations with which Bahá'u'lláh rewards the dedicated efforts of His loved ones throughout the world. The worldwide attention accorded the Faith in the media, which has opened wide the doors of mass proclamation of the divine Message, and the sympathetic discussion of it in the highest councils of mankind with the resulting actions taken by sovereign governments and international authorities, are unprecedented in Bahá'í history.

All this, dear friends, augurs well for the coming year which is rich in Bahá'í occasions. The fiftieth anniversary of the passing of the Greatest Holy Leaf will be commemorated at the five International Conferences and by the publication of a book, compiled at the World Center, comprising texts about her and some hundred of her own letters; the move to the permanent Seat of the Universal House of Justice will take place; in November the twenty-fifth anniversary of the passing of our beloved Guardian will coincide with the midway point of the Seven Year Plan and the year will terminate with the fifth International Convention when members of National Spiritual Assemblies throughout the world will come to Haifa to elect the Universal House of Justice.

The distinguished and invaluable activities of the beloved Hands of the Cause are a source of pride and joy to the entire Bahá'í world. The assumption of wider responsibilities by each Continental Board of Counselors is proving an unqualified success and we express our warm thanks and admiration to the International Teaching Centre and all the Counselors for the great contribution they are making, in increasing measure, to the stability and development of the embryonic World Order of Bahá'u'lláh.

As to Bahá'í youth, legatees of the heroic early believers and now standing on their shoulders, we call upon them to redouble their efforts, in this day of widespread interest in the Cause of God, to enthuse their contemporaries with the divine Message and thus prepare themselves for the day when they will be veteran believers able to assume whatever tasks may be laid upon them. We offer them this passage from the Pen of Bahá'u'lláh:

Blessed is he who in the prime of his youth and the heyday of his life will arise to serve the Cause of the Lord of the beginning and of the end, and adorn his heart with His love. The manifestation of such a grace is greater than the creation of the heavens and of the earth. Blessed are the steadfast and well is it with those who are firm.

The rising sun of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation is having its visible effect upon the world and upon the Bahá'í community itself. Opportunities, long dreamed of for teaching, attended by showering confirmations, now challenge in ever-increasing numbers, every individual believer, every Local and National Spiritual Assembly. The potent seeds sown by 'Abdu'l-Bahá are beginning to germinate within the divinely ordained Order expounded and firmly laid by the beloved Guardian. Humanity is beaten almost to its knees, bewildered and shepherdless, hungry for the bread of life. This is our day of service; we have that heavenly food to offer. The peoples are disillusioned with deficient political theories, social systems and orders; they crave, knowingly or unknowingly, the love of God and reunion with Him. Our response to this growing challenge must be a mighty upsurge of effective teaching, imparting the divine fire which Bahá'u'lláh has kindled in our hearts until a conflagration arising from millions of souls on fire with His love shall at last testify that the Day for which the Chief Luminaries of our Faith so ardently prayed has at last dawned.

[signed: The Universal House of Justice]