

THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE

Ridván 1983

To the Bahá'ís of the World

Dearly loved Friends,

The observable acceleration, during the past decade, of the two processes described by our beloved Guardian, the disintegration of the old order and the progress and consolidation of the new World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, may well come to be regarded by future historians as one of the most remarkable features of this period. The recent increase in this very acceleration is even more remarkable. Both within and without the Cause of God, powerful forces are operating to bring to a climax the twin tendencies of this portentous century. Among the many evidences which reveal this process may be cited, on the one hand, the continual increase of lawlessness, terrorism, economic confusion, immorality and the growing danger from the proliferation of weapons of destruction, and on the other, the world-wide, divinely propelled expansion, consolidation and rapid emergence into the limelight of world affairs of the Cause itself, a process crowned by the wonderful efflorescence of Mount Carmel, the mountain of God, whose Divine springtime is now so magnificently burgeoning.

During the past five years, the historical dialectic of triumph and disaster has operated simultaneously within the Cause of God. The Army of Light has sustained the loss of six Hands of the Cause and waves of bitter persecution which have again engulfed the long-suffering community in Iran, and have resulted in the razing of the House of the Báb, the demolition of Bahá'u'lláh's ancestral home in Tákur, and the martyrdom of scores of valiant souls. Yet these disasters have called forth fresh energies in the hearts of the friends, have fed the deep roots of the Cause and given rise to a great harvest of signal victories. Chief among these are the successful conclusion of the Five Year Plan; the launching of the Seven Year Plan, now in the final year of its second phase and unprecedented proclamation of the Faith to Heads of States, parliaments and parliamentarians, government ministers and officials, leaders of thought and people prominent in the professions, resulting in a change of attitude on the part of the mass media, which now increasingly approach us for information about the Cause.

To these movements must be added the world-wide observances commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the passing of the Greatest Holy Leaf; the completion of the restoration of the upper floor of the House of 'Abdu'lláh Pá'lishá, and its opening, at this very time, to its first visitors; the occupation by the Universal House of Justice of its permanent Seat, in further fulfilment of the great prophecy in the Tablet of Carmel; steady progress on the construction of the first Mashriqu'l-Adhkár of the Pacific Islands in Samoa and the Mother Temple of the Indian Subcontinent in New Delhi.

Among the outstanding features of the teaching and consolidation work are the continuing effective results of the participation of more than sixteen thousand believers from all parts of

the world in the five International Conferences; intensive teaching campaigns carried out with the active support of all levels of the community and drawing upon the enthusiasm and capacity of Bahá'í youth; the establishment of a second radio station in South America; the re-formation of the National Spiritual Assemblies of Uganda and Nepal, and the establishment of nine new National Spiritual Assemblies, two of which will be elected during the month of May this year, bringing the total of these secondary Houses of Justice to 135.

Above and beyond all these is the unity in action achieved by the Bahá'í world community in its efforts to enlist public support for the dearly-loved, greatly-admired, cruelly-beleaguered Iranian believers, a unity further manifested in an outpouring of funds to replace their former liberal contributions, and an upsurge of personal dedication rarely seen on so universal a scale and holding the highest promise for the future.

The growing maturity of a world-wide religious community which all these processes indicate is further evidenced in the reaching out, by a number of national communities, to the social and economic life of their countries, exemplified by the founding of tutorial schools, the inception of radio stations, the pursuit of rural development programs and the operation of medical and agricultural schemes. To these early beginnings must be added the undoubted skills acquired, as a result of the Iranian crisis, in dealing with international organizations, national governments and the mass media—the very elements of society with which it must increasingly collaborate toward the realization of peace on earth.

A wider horizon is opening before us, illumined by a growing and universal manifestation of the inherent potentialities of the Cause for ordering human affairs. In this light can be discerned not only our immediate tasks but, more dimly, new pursuits and undertakings upon which we must shortly become engaged. At present we must complete the objectives of the Seven Year Plan, paying great attention to those inner spiritual developments which will be manifested in greater unity among the friends and in National and Local Spiritual Assemblies functioning "harmoniously, vigorously and efficiently" as the Guardian desired.

We have no doubt that the Bahá'í world community will accomplish all these tasks and go forward to new achievements. The powers released by Bahá'u'lláh match the needs of the times. We may therefore be utterly confident that the new throb of energy now vibrating throughout the Cause will empower it to meet the oncoming challenges of assisting, as maturity and resources allow, the development of the social and economic life of peoples, of collaborating with the forces leading towards the establishment of order in the world, of influencing the exploitation and constructive uses of modern technology, and in all these ways enhancing the prestige and progress of the Faith and uplifting the conditions of the generality of mankind.

It is a time for rejoicing. The Sun of Bahá'u'lláh is mounting the heavens, bringing into ever clearer light the contrast between the gloom, the despair, the frustrations and bewilderment of the world, and the radiance, confidence, joy and certitude of His lovers. Lift up your hearts. The Day of God is here.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

[SIGNED: THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE]