

THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE

16 November 1969

To the Bahá'ís of the World

Dear Friends,

In the worsening world situation, fraught with pain of war, violence and the sudden uprooting of long-established institutions, can be seen the fulfillment of the prophecies of Bahá'u'lláh and the oft-repeated warnings of the Master and the beloved Guardian about the inevitable fate of a lamentably defective social system, an unenlightened leadership and a rebellious and unbelieving humanity. Governments and peoples of both the developed and developing nations, and other human institutions, secular and religious, finding themselves helpless to reverse the trend of the catastrophic events of the day, stand bewildered and overpowered by the magnitude and complexity of the problems facing them. At this fateful hour in human history many, unfortunately, seem content to stand aside and wring their hands in despair or else join in the babel of shouting and protestation which loudly objects, but offers no solution to the woes and afflictions plaguing our age.

Nevertheless a greater and greater number of thoughtful and fair-minded men and women are recognizing in the clamor of contention, grief and destruction, now reaching such horrendous proportions, the evidences of Divine chastisement, and turning their faces towards God are becoming increasingly receptive to His Word. Doubtless the present circumstances, though tragic and awful in their immediate consequences, are serving to sharpen the focus on the indispensability of the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh to the needs of the present age, and will provide many opportunities to reach countless waiting souls, hungry and thirsty for Divine guidance.

It is these opportunities which we must seize before it is too late. What is needed now is the awakening of all believers to the immediacy of the challenge so that each may assume his share of the responsibility for taking the Teachings to all humanity. Universal participation, a salient objective of the Nine Year Plan, must be pressed toward attainment in every continent, country and island of the globe. Every Bahá'í, however humble or inarticulate, must become intent on fulfilling his role as a bearer of the Divine Message. Indeed, how can a true believer remain silent while around us men cry out in anguish for truth, love and unity to descend upon this world?

We all know how often the Master and the beloved Guardian called upon the friends to consciously strive to be more loving, more united, more dedicated and prayerful than ever before in order to overcome the atmosphere of present-day society which is unloving, disunited, careless of right and wrong and heedless of God. "... when we see the increasing darkness in the world today," the Guardian's secretary wrote on his behalf, "we can fully realize that unless the Message of Bahá'u'lláh reaches into the hearts of men and transforms them, there can be no peace and no spiritual progress in the future."

The Nine Year Plan is the current stage in the achievement of that sublime objective. It is now imperative for every Bahá'í to set for himself individual teaching goals. The admonition of 'Abdu'l-Bahá to lead at least one new soul to the Faith each year and the exhortation of Shoghi Effendi to hold a Bahá'í fireside in one's home every Bahá'í month are examples of individual goals. Many have capacities to do even more, but this alone will assure final and complete victory for the Plan.

We call upon the friends to join with us in prayer during the Feast of Sulṭán that we will all become so imbued with zeal, courage and enthusiasm that from this day to the end of the Nine

Year Plan nothing will be able to stay the victorious onward march of the followers of the Most Great Name. May our efforts be worthy of the blessings and confirmations of Bahá'u'lláh.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

[signed: The Universal House of Justice]