

THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE

7 May 1963

To the annual National Conventions of the Bahá'í World

Beloved Friends,

The marvelous happenings which have transpired during and immediately after the twelve days of Ridván attest the greatness of the Cause of God, and fill every Bahá'í heart to overflowing with joy and gratitude. It was in obedience to the summons of the Lord of Hosts Himself that the elected representatives of the fifty-six national and regional communities of the Bahá'í world were called to elect, in the shadow of God's Holy Mountain and in the house of the Center of His Covenant, the members of the Universal House of Justice. It was the Sign of God on Earth, the Dayspring of Divine Guidance, the Guardian of the Cause of God, who gathered more than six thousand Bahá'ís from all parts of the earth to the celebration of the Most Great Jubilee in London.

The first of these historic occasions was marked by events of extreme spiritual and administrative significance at the World Center of the Faith. The daily visits of large groups of believers, of many varying backgrounds, to the sacred Shrines in the twin holy cities; the holding of the First International Bahá'í Convention and the successful accomplishment of its main task; the celebration of the Ridván Feast by some three hundred believers in the company of the Hands of the Cause of God in the precincts of the Ḥaram-i-Aqdas, are events of unique character and untold significance in the history of our beloved Faith.

The celebration of the Most Great Jubilee in London must be described elsewhere. Suffice it to say now that this greatest gathering of Bahá'ís ever held in one place was permeated by a spirit of such bliss as could only have come from the outpourings of the Abhá Kingdom. The review of the progress of the Cause, the presentation of believers from the new races and countries of the world brought within the pale of the Faith during the Beloved Guardian's Ten Year Crusade, of the Knights of Bahá'u'lláh, those valiant souls who carried the banner of Bahá'u'lláh to the unopened and often inhospitable regions of the earth, the spontaneous outbursts of singing of "Alláh-u-Abhá," the informal gatherings, the constant greetings of Bahá'u'lláh's warriors known to each other only by name and service, the youth gatherings, the unprecedented publicity in the press, on radio and television, the daily stream of visitors to the beloved Guardian's resting-place, the radiant faces and heightened awareness of the true and real brotherhood of the human race within the Kingdom of the Everlasting Father, are among the outstanding events of this supreme occasion, the crowning victory of the lifework of Shoghi Effendi.

The Universal House of Justice wishes to reaffirm at this time the tribute which it felt moved to pay to the Hands of the Cause of God at the World Congress, those precious souls who have brought the Cause safely to victory in the name of Shoghi Effendi. We wish also to remember the devoted work of their Auxiliary Board members, as well as the services of the Knights of Bahá'u'lláh, of the army of pioneers, the members of the National and Regional Spiritual Assemblies, the services and prayers and sacrifices of the believers everywhere, all of which in the sum total have attracted such bounties and favors from Bahá'u'lláh.

The Universal House of Justice, in several sessions held in the Holy Land and in London, has been able to initiate its work and to make arrangements for the establishment of the Institution in Haifa. It has no officers, and henceforth its communications to the Bahá'í World will be signed *Universal House of Justice* over an embossed seal.

The Cause of God, launched on the sea of the Divine Plan of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, has achieved, under the superb leadership of its beloved Guardian, a spread throughout the world and a

momentum which must now carry it forward on the next stage of its world-redeeming mission, the second epoch of the Divine Plan. The Universal House of Justice, in close consultation with the Hands of the Cause, is examining the vast range of Bahá'í activity and growth in order to prepare a detailed plan of expansion for the whole Bahá'í community, to be launched at Ridván 1964. But there are some objectives to be achieved at once.

The consolidation of the goals and new communities of the Bahá'í world is an urgent and immediate task facing the fifty-six National Spiritual Assemblies, and an essential preparation for the launching of the new plans. Pioneers must be maintained at their posts and all the Local Spiritual Assemblies strengthened through a firm establishment of Bahá'í community life and an active teaching program. Those National Spiritual Assemblies which rest on the basis of a small number of Local Spiritual Assemblies must make great efforts to insure that this number will be increased at Ridván 1964. Pioneers ready to go to consolidation areas, as well as those eager to open new territories, should make their offers through their National Spiritual Assembly.

The great work of teaching must be extended, not only in those areas where mass conversion is beginning, but everywhere. The high intensity of teaching activity reached at the end of the World Crusade, far from slackening, must now be increased as the friends everywhere draw on the vast spiritual powers released as a result of the celebration of the Most Great Jubilee and the emergence of the Universal House of Justice.

The Ten Year Crusade witnessed the completion of the structure of the Mother Temple of Europe. It is now imperative to complete, without delay, the interior decoration, to install utilities and lay access roads, to landscape grounds and to construct the caretaker's house. This work will cost not less than \$210,000.00, but if delayed it will cost considerably more. The House of Justice calls upon the National Spiritual Assemblies to allocate substantial budgets for the immediate completion of this work.

The plan to be embarked upon next Ridván, the details of which will be announced during the coming year, will include such projects as the extension and embellishment of the endowments at the World Center; collation of the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi; continual reinforcement of the ties binding the Bahá'í World to the United Nations; formation of many more National Spiritual Assemblies, both by division of existing Regional Spiritual Assemblies and the development of new Bahá'í communities, together with the purchase of national Ḥaṣratu'l-Quds, Temple sites and national endowments; the opening of new territories to the Faith; detailed plans for National Spiritual Assemblies involving, in some areas, consolidation goals, in others the multiplication of Bahá'í institutes and schools, in others a great enrichment of Bahá'í literature, and in all a vast increase in the number of Bahá'ís, and the holding of oceanic and intercontinental conferences.

All such expansion and development of the Faith will be dependent upon the Bahá'í Fund. The Universal House of Justice calls the attention of every believer to this vital and pressing matter, and asks the National Spiritual Assemblies to pay special attention to the principle of universal participation, so that every single follower of Bahá'u'lláh may make his offering, however small or great, and thereby identify himself with the work of the Cause everywhere. It is our hope that a constant flow of contributions to the International Fund will make it possible to build up sufficient reserves for the launching of the new plan in 1964.

Beloved friends, we enter the second epoch of the Divine Plan blessed beyond compare, riding the crest of a great wave of victory produced for us by our beloved Guardian. The Cause of God is now firmly rooted in the world. Forward then, confident in the power and protection of the Lord of Hosts, who will, through storm and trial, toil and jubilee, use His devoted followers to bring to a despairing humanity, the life-giving waters of His supreme Revelation.

[signed: The Universal House of Justice]

