

THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE

18 December 1963

To the Bahá'ís of East and West

Dear Friends,

With the rapid approach of the launching of the Nine Year Plan, the Universal House of Justice feels that it is timely to lay clearly before the Bahá'ís of all countries, the needs of the Fund at all its levels: local, national, continental and international.

The continual expansion of the Faith and the diversification of the activities of Bahá'í communities make it more and more necessary for every believer to ponder carefully his responsibilities and contribute as much and as regularly as he or she can. Contributing to the Fund is a service that every believer can render, be he poor or wealthy; for this is a spiritual responsibility in which the amount given is not important. It is the degree of the sacrifice of the giver, the love with which he makes his gift, and the unity of all the friends in this service which bring spiritual confirmations. As the beloved Guardian wrote in August 1957: "All, no matter how modest their resources, must participate. Upon the degree of self-sacrifice involved in these individual contributions will directly depend the efficacy and the spiritual influence which these nascent administrative institutions, called into being through the power of Bahá'u'lláh, and by virtue of the Design conceived by the Center of His Covenant, will exert."

Not only the individual's responsibility to contribute is important at this time, but also the uses to which the fund is put and the areas in which it is expended.

Much of the present rapid expansion of the Faith is taking place in areas of great poverty where the believers, however much they sacrifice, cannot produce sufficient funds to sustain the work. It is these very areas which are the most fruitful in teaching, and a sum of money spent here will produce ten times—even a hundred times—the results obtainable in other parts of the world. Yet in the past months the Universal House of Justice has had to refuse a number of appeals for assistance from such areas because there just was not enough money in the International Fund.

It should therefore be the aim of every local and national community to become not only self-supporting, but to expend its funds with such wisdom and economy as to be able to contribute substantially to the Bahá'í International Fund, thus enabling the House of Justice to aid the work in fruitful but impoverished areas, to assist new National Assemblies to start their work, to contribute to major international undertakings of the Nine Year Plan such as Oceanic Conferences, and to carry forward the work of beautifying the land surrounding the Holy Shrines at the World Center of the Faith.

Nor should the believers, individually or in their Assemblies, forget the vitally important Continental Funds which provide for the work of the Hands of the Cause of God and their Auxiliary Boards. This divine institution, so assiduously fostered by the Guardian, and which has already played a unique role in the history of the Faith, is destined to render increasingly important services in the years to come.

In the midst of a civilization torn by strifes and enfeebled by materialism, the people of Bahá are building a new world. We face at this time opportunities and responsibilities of vast magnitude and great urgency. Let each believer in his inmost heart resolve not to be seduced by the ephemeral allurements of the society around him, nor to be drawn into its feuds and short-lived

enthusiasms, but instead to transfer all he can from the old world to that new one which is the vision of his longing and will be the fruit of his labors.

With loving greetings,

[signed: The Universal House of Justice]