

THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE

5 June 1975

To the Followers of Bahá'u'lláh throughout the World

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

As the Five Year Plan gathers momentum in all parts of the world, with the followers of the Blessed Perfection firmly embarked on the course that will lead to victory, the time has come for us to contemplate, in preparation for its imminent initiation, the project which will rank as the greatest single undertaking of that Plan, the construction of a befitting seat for the Universal House of Justice in the heart of God's Holy Mountain.

Nearly thirty-six years ago, after overcoming a multitude of difficulties, the beloved Guardian succeeded in transferring to Mount Carmel the sacred remains of the Purest Branch and Navváb, interring them in the immediate neighborhood of the resting-place of the Greatest Holy Leaf, and alluded, in these words, to the "capital institutional significance" that these events constituted in the unfoldment of the World Center of the Faith:

For it must be clearly understood, nor can it be sufficiently emphasized, that the conjunction of the resting-place of the Greatest Holy Leaf with those of her brother and mother incalculably reinforces the spiritual potencies of that consecrated Spot which, under the wings of the Báb's overshadowing Sepulcher, and in the vicinity of the future Mashriq'l-Adhkár which will be reared on its flank, is destined to evolve into the focal center of those world-shaking, world-embracing, world-directing administrative institutions, ordained by Bahá'u'lláh and anticipated by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and which are to function in consonance with the principles that govern the twin institutions of the Guardianship and the Universal House of Justice. Then, and then only, will this momentous prophecy which illuminates the concluding passages of the Tablet of Carmel be fulfilled: "Erelong will God sail His Ark upon thee (Carmel), and will manifest the people of Bahá who have been mentioned in the Book of Names."

To attempt to visualize, even in its barest outline, the glory that must envelop these institutions, to essay even a tentative and partial description of their character or the manner of their operation, or to trace however inadequately the course of events leading to their rise and eventual establishment is far beyond my own capacity and power. Suffice it to say that at this troubled stage in world history the association of these three incomparably precious souls who, next to the three Central Figures of our Faith, tower in rank above the vast multitude of the heroes, Letters, martyrs, hands, teachers and administrators of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh, in such a potentially powerful spiritual and administrative Center, is in itself an event which will release forces that are bound to hasten the emergence in a land which, geographically, spiritually and administratively, constitutes the heart of the entire planet, of some of the brightest gems of that World Order now shaping in the womb of this travailing age.

The first of the majestic edifices constituting this mighty Center, was the building for the International Archives of the Faith which was completed in the summer of 1957 as one of the last major achievements of Shoghi Effendi's Guardianship and which set the style for the remaining structures which, as described by him, were to be raised in the course of time in the form of a far-flung arc on the slope of Mount Carmel. In the eighteen years since that achievement, the community of the Most Great Name has grown rapidly in size and influence: from twenty-six National Spiritual Assemblies to one hundred and nineteen, from some one thousand to seventeen thousand Local Spiritual Assemblies, and from four thousand five hundred localities to over seventy thousand, accompanied by a corresponding increase in the volume of the work carried on at the World Center of the Faith and in the complexity of its institutions. It is now both necessary

and possible to initiate construction of a building that will not only serve the practical needs of a steadily consolidating administrative center but will, for centuries to come, stand as a visible expression of the majesty of the divinely ordained institutions of the Administrative Order of Bahá'u'lláh.

Faced, like the Archives Building, with stone from Italy, and surrounded by a stately colonnade of sixty Corinthian columns, the seat for the Universal House of Justice will contain, in addition to the council chamber of the House of Justice, a library, a concourse for the reception of pilgrims and dignitaries, storage vaults with air purification for the preservation of original Tablets and other precious documents, accommodation for the secretariat and the many ancillary services that will be required. Conceived in a style of enduring beauty and majesty, and faced with stone that will weather the centuries, the building in its interior arrangements will be very simple and capable of adaptation in the generations ahead to whatever technological advances will be made by the rapid growth of human knowledge.

The erection of this building which, comprising five and a half stories, far surpasses in size and complexity any building at present in existence at the World Center presents a major challenge to the Bahá'í community, whose resources are already all too meager in relation to the great tasks that lie before it. But the spirit of sacrifice has been the hallmark of the followers of Bahá'u'lláh of every race and clime and as they unite to raise this second of the great edifices of the Administrative Center of their Faith they will rejoice at having the inestimable privilege of taking part in a "vast and irresistible process" which Shoghi Effendi stated is "unexampled in the spiritual history of mankind," a process "which will synchronize with two no less significant developments—the establishment of the Lesser Peace and the evolution of Bahá'í national and local institutions—the one outside and the other within the Bahá'í world—will attain its final consummation, in the Golden Age of the Faith, through the raising of the standard of the Most Great Peace, and the emergence, in the plenitude of its power and glory, of the focal Center of the agencies constituting the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh."

[signed: The Universal House of Justice]